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THE WORKS

OF

MISS THACKERAY

Anne Isabella (Thackeray), Lady Ritchie

VOLUME VIII.

MISS ANGEL

and

FULHAM LAWN

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LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1903

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MISS ANGEL

AND

FULHAM LAWN

BY

MISS THACKERAY

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1903

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TO

MRS. HERBERT DUCKWORTH.

WILL YOU TAKE WHAT IS MINE TO DEDICATE TO YOU IN

THIS LITTLE BOOK, OF WHICH SO MUCH

IS YOURS ALREADY

HOTEL ST. ROMAIN, PARIS:
May 4, 1875.

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MISS ANGEL.

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MISS ANGEL.

CHAPTER I.

A PRINT OF SIR JOSHUA'S.

YESTERDAY, at Mr. Colnaghi's, I saw a print lying on the table, the engraving of one of Sir Joshua's portraits. It was the picture of a lady some five or six and twenty years of age. The face is peculiar, sprightly, tender, a little obstinate. The eyes are very charming and intelligent. The features are broadly marked; there is something at once homely and dignified in their expression. The little head is charmingly set upon its frame. A few pearls are mixed with the heavy loops of hair; two great curls fall upon the sloping shoulders; the slim figure is draped in light folds fastened by jewelled bands, such as those which people then wore. A loose scarf is tied round the waist. Being cold, perhaps, sitting in Sir Joshua's great studio, the lady has partly wrapped herself in a great fur cloak. The whole

effect is very good, nor is it an inconvenient dress to sit still and be painted in. How people *lived* habitually in such clothes I cannot understand. But although garments may represent one phase after another of fashion; loop, writhe, sweep, flounce, wriggle themselves into strange forms, and into shapes prim or romantic or practical as the case may be, faces tell another story. They scarcely alter even in expression from one generation to another; the familiar looks come travelling down to us in all sorts of ways and vehicles; by paint, by marble, by words, by inherited instincts. There is some secret understanding transmitted, I do believe, from one set of human beings to another, from year to year, from age to age, ever since Eve herself first opened her shining eyes upon the Garden of Inno cence and flung the apple to her descendants.

This little head, of which I am now writing, has certainly a character of its own. Although it was great Sir Joshua himself who painted Miss Angel—so her friends called her—and set the stamp of his own genius upon the picture, although the engraver has again come between us to reproduce the master's impression; beyond their art, and across the century that separates the lady from the print lying on Mr. Colnaghi's table, some feeling of her identity seems to reach one still as one stands in the shop, after years of other things and people; an identity which seems to survive, in the mysterious way in which people's secret intangible feelings do outlive the past, the

future, and death, and failure, and even success itself. When I began to criticise the looks of my black-and-white heroine and to ask myself if there was anything wanting in her expression, any indescribable want of fine perceptive humour, the eyes seemed suddenly to look reproachfully and to refute my unspoken criticism.

Those outward signs which we call manners, and customs, and education have changed since that quick heart ceased to beat, since Miss Angel lived and ruled in her May-Fair kingdom; but the true things and significations that those signs express are not less true because they have lasted a little longer and gone through a few more revolutions. It is only the false impressions, the exaggerations and affectations that, by a natural law, destroy themselves. How many did she live out in her appointed span of life, and wear out one by one on her journey towards the truth? My poor Angel all her life was used to praise and blame, to be accused of faults she never committed, to be admired for qualities that she scarcely possessed. Art was art, and so indeed was nature, in the language of signs, practised by her and her companions. On the Continent Arcadia was coming to an end; shepherds and shepherdesses were straggling off and driving their flocks before them. Watteau was no more; Boucher was waning; Vernet's wide seas were overflooding the pastoral vallies, flowing northwards, irresistible, wide, delightful. With us Olympus was beginning to be in fashion. Long-legged

deities, cupids, and heroes in helmets or slashed silk hose were colonising English studios.

Fancy and natural feeling are expressed by odes, by nymphs, by ovals, and mezzotints. Cipriani teaches in his schools; classic temples are rising in windy gardens (for alas! the climate does not lend itself to this golden age revival), and never were winters more wintry, fogs more enduring, or frosts more nipping than those at the end of the last century.

Perhaps to Miss Angel the darkness may have seemed but as a veil to the sweet dazzling images of her early youth. She may have still seen the sunlight through the mists and fogs of the great city where she had cast her lot, and her November may have appeared splendid still, and set upon a golden background, while she found present sunshine in the admiring eyes of her friends and lovers.

Some lives have in them a quality which may perhaps be compared to that secret of which the early Venetians knew the mystery—some secret of light, some sweet transparent gift of colouring, a hidden treasure of hope shining through aftershadow.

I do not say that this is the highest among the gifts, that there are not far greater things in art and in nature than sweet harmonies of colour; but it is a delightful quality in its way, in pictures and in the lives of those who look at pictures and of those who paint them.

Angelica Kauffmann's is a life so tinted, warmed at the

outset by some such broad golden stream. It flooded its youth with hope, and shone on through a mid-life of storm and shadow. In later days tears and languor dimmed those bright azure eyes and overmastered the brave spirit that we must all respect and recognise; but to the last moment hope remained—hope for life's continuance when all else was gone; false hope indeed, only to be realised by a mightier revelation of life than ours.

Poor little Angelica! so true to herself, so defeated in her highest flights, so complete in her victory—not always over those things she set herself to conquer, but over others by the road, along which she struggled valiantly for sixty years. Over-praised, over-loved, deceived, and satisfied, little by little she has grown up out of the dictionaries and guide-books, out of the faithful old friend Rossi's careful sentences, out of the relics scattered by her hand. She was no great genius, as people once thought, no inspired painter of gods and men. Her heroes stand in satin pumps and feathered toques; her nymphs are futile and somewhat dislocated beings; one laughs at them, but one loves them too. Some of her portraits are charming, and still hold their own by the good right of grace and truthful feeling.

I think that, as far as it lay in her power, Angelica was true to her perceptions. The artificial education of the day cast its constraints upon her simple soul, and yet, with all its failings, her work is bright with a womanly

sympathy and transparence, a delicacy of rendering which holds its own even now.

Religion, as Angelica painted her, still sits in the South Kensington Museum surrounded by attendant virtues. There is Hope with her anchor, Faith with her hands crossed upon her breast, Charity reclining in the place of honour. They all have Greek profiles. The inspiration is something like an apotheosis of some of Madame Tussaud's happiest compositions, and yet a certain harmony and innocent enthusiasm redeems it from utter absurdity, and draws one into sympathy with the painter. One head, crowned and gentle, seems to shine with a real Italian brightness through the grim November vapours in the galleries, to which we have wandered across a century.

CHAPTER II.

IN A SHRINE.

Pictures are strange and shifting things. People come and stand before them, to wonder, to envy, to study; sometimes it is to realize their secret hearts painted out upon canvas and hanging up framed before them—sometimes veils hang before the images. It is all there—you see it, know it—and see and know nothing as you pass by untouched. Or again, some power has dispelled the mists, strange life flashes along the walls, picture answers picture, and some great dominant chord breaks out, in a burst of silent music, imposing its own harmony upon the rest. In those days the Assumption hung above an altar in the Church of the Frari, a solemn culmination to its worship. Old Kauffmann had obtained leave for his daughter to copy there, and day after day she used to come to the Piazza where the great Church stands, rearing its stupendous bricks upon the depths.

To Angelica it was always a sensation when she

walked from the blazing sun and labouring life without into these solemn enclosures. Here in the church of the Frari are the tombs of the Doges resting from their rule. They seem pondering still as they lie, carved in stately marbled death, contemplating the past with their calm brows and their hooked noses. The great church is piled arch upon arch, tomb beyond tomb; some of these monuments hang in the nave high over the heads of the people as they kneel; above the city and its cries, and its circling life, and the steps of the easy-going Venetians.

There is no one in the chapel where Angelica is at work; it is cool and dark and empty. The altar-piece hangs veiled with morning shadow; as the day goes on, a rod of slanting sunshine strikes the picture, and the floods of liquid crimson light come floating and outpouring over the marble shrine.

But Angelica could not realise it all that day, she could not fall into her work. She was tired, or cross, or dissatisfied; she had not slept the night before. Her father, as usual, had left her at the door of the church, bidding her be diligent, but she could not be diligent to good effect; one thing and another disturbed her.

Every now and then their friend and fellow-lodger, Antonio, who was painting in the Sacristy, had come up and vexed her by a criticism. 'You waste your time attempting such subjects,' he had said; 'it is not in your grasp; you should not accept such commissions.'

'I must take what comes,' said Angelica, pettishly 'I need not complain when I am given a masterpiece to reproduce.'

'To reproduce!' said Antonio; 'you might as well try to paint the sun;' and so he walked away leaving her discouraged, out of tune. Antonio was a delicate, a nervous-looking man, with worn hands and an anxious, noble-looking head. His black brows nearly met over clear eyes, full of thought and expression. He had a quantity of frizzed black hair, which he used to push back wearily; he was of middle size, slightly bent. A word, a nothing at times would set him trembling. Sometimes, however, he had sudden bursts of confidence and good spirits. He did not spare others although he suffered so much himself from their criticisms. There is a picture of St. John the Baptist in the Church of the Madonna del Orto.'[1] Haggard and tender stands St. John against the golden limpid sky that still lights the chapel, where it has burnt for three hundred years. Cima da Conegliana painted the picture a couple of centuries before Antonio Zucchi was born, but it has some look of this friend of Angelica.

There were lines of care in Antonio's face and lines of grey in his curls, though he was little over thirty years of age. Of these thirty years he had known Angelica for

[1] 'Ah!' said the custode, who showed it to us, 'I could travel round the world with that picture. Look,' he cried with enthusiasm, 'observe the Saint's hair, did you ever see such curls? Signor Ruskin knows me and my picture well.'

twenty. Miss Angel could not imagine what it would be like not to know Antonio, or not to be vexed with him. He was the least satisfied of all her friends and the least satisfactory in his criticisms.

It was but rarely that her sweet temper was so ruffled as to-day, and it happened that when she was most angry with Antonio and with herself, a gentleman, young, stately, dressed in deepest mourning, had come up, walking across the marble aisle, and, with a glance at her picture, asked her if 'the charming copy was for sale?' 'Who is one to believe?' thinks the poor little painter, as she looks up demurely, poises her brush, and says, 'It is an order, and sold already.'

'You must allow me, madam, to envy the fortunate possessor of such a picture, copied by so fair a hand,' said the stranger in a low voice, bending his handsome head with one of the courteous flourishes then in fashion, and he walked away with long black legs.

Then a priest came up to look; then a couple of soldiers; then a new-married couple. 'How beautiful,' said the bride; 'I like the copy better than the picture—it is a prettier size; see how she has got it all in.'

Angel was not unused to compliments; she was a princess in her own little kingdom, but she did not care for them quite so broadly expressed as this. She half

hoped the black prince would come back and make her some more consoling speeches. There was something in his manner which interested her. How different from Antonio, with his rude abruptness and jealousy. Any one must allow that *he* was disagreeable. Angelica painted on quietly for some time, but she made no progress. All about her the marble arches and the pictures had begun to glow with light and to beguile her from her work.

Presently comes a soft rustling and scent of perfume, and again the girl looks up. A lady is standing beside her and looking at her copy of the 'Assumption.' This is evidently a personage of some importance, not very young, but very beautiful, with a pale high brow and dreamy sweet looks. She is dressed in the fashion of the day, in white watered silk with grey fur trimmings and pearls. She wears long loose gloves upon her arms. The gentle fragrance comes with each wave of her fan; that great flaunting fan with its jewelled sticks.

The lady does not speak, only smiles, as she moves away and passes on, looking about her as she disappears into the over-arching forest of marble.

The bells of Venice are jingling outside in the great, hot, hot sunshine.

As the lady leaves the chapel she looks back once more at Angelica, looks and then turns away, retracing her steps

and smiling with gentle dignity as she sweeps past Antonio, who is coming up the step.

She scarcely sees the plain young man in his shabby coat and knee-breeches, but the same thought is in both their minds. It is one same living picture that they are both looking at with interest, that of Angelica, who had put down her brushes thoughtfully.

I can see her, though it is a hundred years ago since she stood there, as Antonio could see her as he stood upon the marble step. How well he knew every shade and light of that sweet living picture. How often he had watched it, at home, or in the churches, and the strange galleries where she painted all day long, and whence he would fetch Angelica home after her day's work was ended. Only yesterday from the curtained doorway in the dealer's palace he had seen her standing as now, with her palette in her hand. He could have drawn each line and curve of the light figure in its common faded dress now standing before great Titian's altar fires. Her head was a little bent with that gentle turn he knew so well, her thick brown hair was all tied back with a brown ribbon beneath her veil. Her two little feet stood somewhat far apart, springing, firm, and elastic, from the marble. One hand was raised to shade the light from her eyes, in the other—from habit carefully extended—she held her palette. There she stood, for once pale and discouraged, and with dimmed eyes. Her father would be furious if

she were to tell him of Antonio's gibes, but then her father was no critic where her work was concerned. This she owned in her heart, and perhaps she agreed more often than she chose to acknowledge with Antonio, the jealous, rude, tiresome, friend. Ah! how infinitely pleasanter are the criticisms of acquaintances than those of friends who live in the house with you. The English Signor Dance whom they had met at Rome, how he had praised her work, with what fervour and sincerity; and the friendly priests in the villa at Como, how they had exclaimed in wonder at her portraits of the cardinal and his chaplain! If only Antonio would praise her work as they did, it might give her some courage and interest to go on.

So there she stood, pale and discouraged, an inadequate little copyist blinking at the sun, so she told herself. Presently her heart began to beat, and the colour came into her cheeks as she forgot her own insignificance and caught some strange terrified emotion from the great achievement before her. Some fancy came to her that she was one of the women in the crowd looking on with the amazed Apostles, as they stretch their astonished hands. The great mystery is being accomplished before their eyes. The Virgin rises cloud-lifted to the jubilant chorus of angels and cherubims; simple, extatic, borne upward upon the resistless vapours. The glories seem to gather gold, the clouds to drift upon unseen winds, the

distance widens and intensifies. This strange great heaven floats and shines again triumphant before the dazzled eyes of the mortals round the altar.

One or two people had come up. Had anything occurred in the great Assumption? Little old dirty Pinuzzi, the painter, crept along to see from his distant corner, where he had been counting his beads with his trembling fingers. He stood clucking his admiration with odd noises and shakings of the head. Then some one sighed deeply; it was the strange lady who had returned; some magnetic thrill of sympathy possessed them all, as when the bursts of silver trumpets come sounding along St. Peter's and the crowds respond.

At that moment a harsh angry voice calls Miss Angel very peremptorily back to earth again. 'Angelica, what doest thou? where is thy morning's work? Why art thou wasting time and money?' So the voice begins in German, then the scolding turns into Italian as Antonio comes up once more.

The accuser is a tall, angry, grey, old man who is gazing with displeasure at the easel, at the idle brush, and at his daughter in the crowd. 'Is this your manner of working?' he cries, oblivious of listeners.

'It is the best for her,' said Antonio, interfering. 'Hush, John Joseph!' he added, in a low voice; 'how can you speak to her so?'

'Be quiet, Antonio; you can afford, perhaps, to idle your life away. Angelica cannot allow herself that luxury. What has she done all this long morning?'

'Nothing, father!' said Angelica, turning round from habit to meet him, and to soothe away his anger, as she could always do, with a word and a fond look; but to-day the sense of the Impossible had overmastered the custom of the present, and she forgot her artless wiles and her father's displeasure, in a sudden longing for some higher achievement and some better ideal. Her face changed, the smile faded. 'I was tired, father, and no wonder,' and with a sudden movement she held out her palette to him. 'Look at this,' she said, 'and look at that! How can I do it? How can you ask me to do it?' Her voice echoed sadly under the over-arching vault. Antonio looked at her with an approving flash from beneath his black eyebrows.

'What absurdity!' cried the old man. 'Is it to-day that she is to tell me she cannot paint? After all the crowns she has won—after all the sacrifices her mother and I have made—all the hopes we have indulged in! Why did you not say so to Giuseppe Morosco when he gave you the order? Ungrateful girl!'

The tears which started to Angelica's eyes changed her future destiny for years and years.

'Might I, a stranger, venture to ask a favour?' said the lady, coming forward and addressing Angelica from

her waves of satin, of laces; she spoke in a very sweet and melancholy voice. 'I am leaving Venice very shortly. I should regret my going less, if I might carry away something to recall the happy hours I have spent. Nothing would satisfy me so well as a painting from this lady's hand.'

Gently certain of herself, she looked from the father to the daughter. She was not used to see life from any but her own aspect and level. The father's reproaches, the daughter's tears, were a revelation to this impressionable personage, who was not used to be thwarted, and who had suddenly determined to make this girl happy, and to wipe away her tears with her own cambric handkerchief, if need be.

'Perhaps,' she continued, addressing the old man with a charming dignified grace, 'you would allow me, sir, to take your daughter home in my gondola? Would you trust yourself to my care?' she said to Miss Angel. 'We might consult upon the subject of the picture, which I hope you may consent to paint for me. I should like to show you my children, and my husband, who would make a noble study.'

Angel's tearful blue eyes answer unconsciously to the two shining flashes, the smile that greets her. It seemed as if they were friends already. 'I should like to paint you just as you are,' thought Angelica. 'You great ladies can make yourselves into pictures.'

Old Pinuzzi whispered something into Kauffmann's

ear. 'It is her Excellency Lady W——, the English Ambassadress,' he said.

Old Kauffmann bowed to the ground. 'I know! I know!' he answered, quickly. 'You are too good to my poor child,' said the old fellow. 'My daughter's name is perhaps not unknown to your Excellency—Angelica Kauffmann,' he repeated, proudly. 'I, her father, may truly say that her name is known in all Italy. We have lately come from Naples, where all the galleries were thrown open to us—that of the Palace of Capo di Monte, and many others. Her gifts of music and painting, her remarkable precocity, have——'

'Dear father,' said Angelica, interrupting; 'the lady has judged me too favourably already. Antonio would describe my poor performances very differently.'

She spoke with a smile, but she wounded her poor plain-speaking friend to the heart. He turned pale, and abruptly walked away.

'I thank you, sir, for telling me your daughter's name. Indeed I half suspected it already. Her brilliant reputation is well known to me and many of my friends,' said the lady. My friend the Abbé Franck showed me a most interesting letter from Rome not long ago, describing her rare gifts. The Abbé Winkelman speaks of her too, with enthusiastic praise, and I have seen her beautiful portrait of my old master, the great

Porpora.' Then she added, with a sort of dignified shyness, 'I have little to offer as a temptation to one so gifted; but if she will accept me as a friend, it will be conferring a favour that I shall know how to value.'

The lady held out her hand as she spoke, and Angelica gladly took it in her young grateful grasp.

Old Kauffmann's eyes glistened when Angelica started off with this high company, dressed in her shabby dress, timid yet resolute—the compeer of any lady in the land. No thought of any difference of rank discomposed her, as she prepared to accompany her new-found protectress. The girl was bewitched by the beautiful lady.

As the ladies walked up the transept, two little barefooted children, hand in hand, came pattering softly along the marble pavement, passing beneath the tombs of the Doges; and making for an open door where only a curtain swung, dark against all the blaze without. The rays of light came through on every side, streaking the flat marble monument of some defunct Venetian buried there in the centre aisle with all dignity and heraldry and engraved into eternal glory. Outside, in the flaring piazza, some fiddler on his way had struck up a country tune, to the call of which the children were hastening, but the youngest, a mere baby, suddenly stopped and began to dance upon the marble tomb with some pretty flying patter of little steps. The little ragged

sister dragged the baby, still dancing, away, and the two straggled out by the curtained door into the piazza.

'Did you see them?' said Angelica, greatly touched.

'Poor little wretches,' said the Ambassadress; 'there should be railings round the tomb. Come, dearest creature'

CHAPTER III.

GONDOLAS.

ANTONIO saw Angelica walk away with the splendid stranger, and as she did so he jealously felt as if all was over between them. Old Kauffmann was surely demented to let her go—was this the way he guarded his treasure? Would Antonio have let her go in company with those worldly people who take artists up to suit the fancy of the moment—who throw them by remorselessly and pass on when their fancy is over, leaving them perhaps wounded, mortified, humiliated? Ah! no, no; he would have guarded and shielded her from all the world, if it had been in his power.

They all lived together in the same house, one of the smallest on the Grand Canal—a narrow shabby little tenement enough, with a view of palaces all about, and itself more splendid to Antonio than any marble magnificence: for the narrow casement gave her light and sunshine as morning after morning broke; and the low

roof sheltered her evening after evening. Then Antonio would come down from his top attic in the roof and spend the peaceful hours with the old painter and his docile pupil. Only last night they had been sitting together. How happy they were! They had a lamp, and Angel had her drawing-board, and Antonio had brought down his engraving-work. He used to design altar-pieces and patterns for printers, and architectural designs for the convent of the Armenians, and ornaments for walls. He had painted the ceiling of the little sitting-room with lovely arabesques, and garlands, and fountains, underneath which Angel's brown head bent busily over her evening's toil.

There she sat in her white dressing-gown; the window was open, the stars looked in, the sighs and voices reached them from the water below, she was copying engravings and casts from the antique. Antonio had brought her some anatomical figures to draw from, but she hated them. They frightened her at night, she said. 'Why did not Tonio draw from them himself?'

'It is mere waste of time for me to attempt the human figure,' Antonio had said, sadly. 'I have no gift whatever; see how my hand trembles—I am a mere mechanician. Once I had hope, now it is all I can do to live by my tricks. . . Perhaps when I go to England, where decorations are better paid than here, and where,

as I am told, many palaces are building, I may be able to get on better than I have done hitherto.'

But all this was what had happened. Now, at this moment, the boat rocked backwards and forwards to the gondolier's circling oar, the shadows danced a delicious contredanse. Splash gentle oar, rise domes and spires upon the vault, sing voices calling along the water, stream golden suns reflected there.

The gondola flies down a narrow passage towards an open place where the canals diverge; the shadows part, and fire is streaming from the tumultuous water. Sà premi! cry the gondoliers; for a moment all is swinging confusion; then the glistening boats and the heavy laden barges make way before her Excellency's gondola, and it glides on once more.

Her Excellency, the English Ambassadress, leans back among her cushions, looking out languidly; the lights flash from the upper windows of the tall palaces, balconies start overhead marked upon the sky. Now it is a palace to let, with wooden shutters swinging in shadow; now they pass the yawning vaults of great warehouses piled with saffron and crimson dyes, where barges are moored and workmen straining at the rolling barrels. The Ambassadress looks up; they are sliding along the great brown wall of some garden terrace; a

garland has crept over the brick, and droops almost to the water; one little spray encircles a rusty ring hanging there with its shadow. A figure comes and looks over the wall, it is that of a man with a handsome dark cut face, plain unpowdered hair, a mourning dress. He bows low from his terrace walk, looking with a grave unmoved face. The Ambassadress smiles and kisses her pretty loosely-gloved fingers. 'That is a new friend of my lord's, M. le Comte de Horn,' she says, smiling to her companion, who looks up in turn at the head against the sky. Angelica wonders where she has seen that dark head before; then she remembers that it was in the Church of the Frari scarce an hour ago. She is a little shy, but quite composed as she leans lightly back in her place by the great lady; her stuff dress looks somewhat out of keeping with the splendid equipage where the carpets are Persian and the cushions are covered with silver damask, and the very awnings are of soft flame-coloured silk. They have been put up by the Ambassadress's order, in place of the black hood which oppressed her, for she loves light and air and liberty. Now they touch palace walls, and with a hollow jar start off once more. Now comes a snatch of a song through an old archway; here are boats and voices, the gondolier's earrings twinkle in the sun, here are vine wreaths, and steps where the children, those untiring spectators of life, are

clustering; more barges with heavy fruit and golden treasure go by. A little brown-faced boy is lying with his brown legs in the sun on the very edge of a barge, dreaming over into the green water; he lazily raises his head to look, and falls back again; a black boat passes like a ghost, its slender points start upwards in a line with the curve of yonder spire: now out of all this swing of shadow and confusion they cross a sweet breadth of sunlight, and come into the Grand Canal. A handsome young couple gliding by, look up in admiration at the beautiful lady.

She sits, beautiful in glistening grey and falling lace, with feathery soft lines of ornament, with a diamond aigrette shining in her powdered hair—dignified, conscious. No wonder the young couple are dazzled, that the dark-faced man looks out from the terrace wall, that the girl sitting by the lady's side is bewitched by all that grace and kindness. It comes as a revelation to her, and seems to illumine all the beauty of this new world in which she finds herself for the first time *awakened* to life somehow by some inner call, by some loving revelation of the eyes and the imagination.

The Ambassadress made Angelica answer a hundred questions about her life and her work as they went along. She was perfectly charming in her manner, full of interest and kindness, but her questions were almost more than

Angelica cared to answer. The girl told herself that with one so kind, so beautiful, she need have no reserve, and yet other people found it difficult at times to be quite natural and unreserved with this great lady.

By degrees, as the conversation went on, Angel felt some curious, anxious, restless influence, upon her nerves. She could hardly define it, nor why she was at once more and more charmed and agitated by the beautiful stranger. She was not the first who had experienced this curious impression. Lady W. meanwhile continues her questions: 'Was that her father?' and 'Was that young man a relation?' 'Had she a mother?'

'I have a dead mother,' said Angelica, with a very sweet expression; 'her name was Cléofe Lucin. We used to live at Coire, by the side of the stream; her bedroom window hung over the water, and she used to hold my hand, and let me lean out as far as possible. We were very poor, and my father could not get on; he found work at Morbegno at last, and we all went away. I cried when I left my home and the terrace-garden, and my mother wiped my tears with her apron, and kissed my hands. She used to teach me, and keep me with her always. I never left her till she left me—that was nearly five years ago,' said Angelica very softly. 'She was very beautiful; I have never seen any one like her. To-day, when you spoke to me, I was thinking that Titian's Madonna had something of her.'

'And who is your dark friend?' said Lady W., who had lost the thread for a moment. 'Are you engaged to be married?'

Angelica shook her head. 'I am married to my brush,' she said gaily; 'I want no other husband. Before I came here I sometimes thought there might be other things in life; but when I see these glorious works, which seem to me to surpass even the Caraccis in magnificent conceptions, I feel that it is as much as my poor soul can grasp.'

She pushed back her thick curls as she spoke, and looked up—an eager young spirit longing to take flight—over-trained, over-stimulated by praise, by a sense of enthusiastic responsibility perhaps, but full of hope, of courage, of trust in the future. And what she said was true, her ideal was all in all to her just then.

In some mysterious way she imagined at times that Raphael and Titian, and her beloved Caracci and Caravaggio, were all waiting in some painter's Paradise anxiously expecting to see her start in their pursuit. When she talked of her art, some sort of light would come into her face. Such enthusiasm is often something in itself—an inspiration not to be despised; but it does not create the gifts that should belong to it by rights.

When Angelica talked of art, she was a little conscious, perhaps; but it was a sweet, artless consciousness, and from her very heart she loved her work.

'It was like a new soul in my soul,' she said, with her vibrating voice, 'when I came here first and learned to know them all. Before that, I sometimes imagined . . . .' Angelica smiled. 'Girls have their fancies,' she said.

'And have you no fancies now?' said her patroness, very seriously. 'Is this young heart untouched?'

'Mine is a cold heart, I fear,' said Angelica; 'I have to earn money for our home, and to take care of my father in my mother's place. My interests are too great to leave place in my heart for love.'

'But could you imagine love without interest,' said the Ambassadress, very quickly; 'surely, interest is the very soul of love.'

'Then my love is for Titian, for the great Veronese, for Tintoret,' cried Angelica, flushing and excited. 'These are the altars at which I now worship,' she said, pointing with her pretty finger to the Doge's Palace which they were now approaching.

The Ambassadress was looking at Angelica curiously, with her great-lady expression; the sun was still shining, the bells were still ringing; they were sliding by the Lion of St. Marc, and the lady suddenly called to her gondolier to stop. Then, with a charming change of manner, she said to Angel, 'Now you must be my teacher, and I will be your pupil; take me to see your pictures.'

Angelica was not surprised. It seemed to her a very natural impulse. She did not know that a whole house-

nold was waiting while they deliberately walked from room to room in noble company. Gods and heroes, allegories in white satin, Venice ruling the world; all the pomp, all the splendour of life, is there; and then they come to a vast room full of present, past, and future. . . .

A cicerone is explaining the painting on the wall. 'This picture represents the entire human race and the kingdom of heaven,' he says; 'Tintoret painted it when he was seventy-five years of——'

'Don't listen to him,' said Angelica; 'you will not care for this: come with me.' And the two figures pass on.

At first this Paradise of Tintoret is so strange that no wonder the lovely world outside, the beautiful courtyard, the flying birds, and drifting Venetians, the great golden September, seem more like heaven to those who are basking in their sweetness. But it is well worth while, by degrees, with some pain and self-denial, to climb in spirit to that strange crowded place towards which old Tintoret's mighty soul was bent. Is it the heaven towards which his great heart yearned? He has painted surprise and rapture in the face of a soul just born into this vast circling vortex: with its sudden pools and gleams of peace. Mary Mother above is turning to her Son, with outstretched arms, and pointing to the crowds with tender motherhood. In the midst of this great eventful

turmoil a man sits absorbed in a book, reading unmoved. Angels, with noble wings, take stately flights, cross and recross the darkened canvas. A far-away procession passes in radiance. . . .

Would you have other revelations of this mighty mind, let us follow Angelica and her pupil along a noble gallery to a farther room, where by a window that looks into a court hangs a picture that may well charm them by its tender dawn-like grace. Ariadne holds out her languid hand. Bacchus rises from the sea. Half a floating dream, half a vision; almost here, almost there upon the wall. The picture seemed to reach into their very hearts. Peace! said the horizon, while the wonderful tale of love was told anew. Bacchus beseeching; Ariadne tender, passionless, pitiful. Pity was there, painted upon the harmony and the silence.

Neither of the women moved or spoke at first. The elder lady stood absorbed, and her thoughts travelled away; far, far from the pictures, to some fancies of her own painting, while Angelica, with her blue eyes, looked towards her for sympathy.

'This *must* be love—the very spirit of true feeling and sentiment!' cried the girl.

'Do you think so?' said Lady W., with some sudden impatience, 'I do not think she loves him much; perhaps she is still thinking of Theseus; and yet I do not believe in enduring sentiment,' she added abruptly.

'But sentiment *is*, whether people respond at the time or not,' said Angelica. 'Surely in generous hearts the feeling remains for ever.' As she spoke, a great clock began to strike, and some birds whirred past the window, casting their shadows across the picture.

'My dear child,' said the Ambassadress, who did not care to be contradicted; 'we must not waste any more time. Come, let us go back to the gondola.'

As they went downstairs, they met Antonio, with his colour-box under his arm; he would have passed them without a word, but Angelica smiled and kissed her hand. When they reached the gondola, the Ambassadress sank down with a sigh.

'There is that gentleman again,' said Angelica, looking back. The mysterious stranger who had looked over the terrace wall was just stepping into his gondola from the steps of the Piazza. Had he been in the Palace; she had not seen him there.

CHAPTER IV.

PALACES.

The gondola stopped at a closed gate that led from marble steps into a terraced garden full of the sweet fragrance of autumn, and Angelica followed her protectress across the path that led to the entrance of the Palace. A great marble bason full of water stood in the shadow of a trellis; two little girls were dancing round and round it. The beautiful lady stopped for an instant and called them to her, and the little creatures came up, dropped low curtseys, and then ran away immediately. The entrance hall was a marble-shaded place, leading into the sitting-rooms, that all opened from one to another. They were very handsomely furnished; pictures stood upon easels; cabinets and tapestried curtains had been disposed to the best advantage; a flame-coloured room with ebony furniture led to a sea-green sort of cave. Then came a great white room, where a beautiful Vandyke was hanging in the place of honour. It was the picture of a little boy all dressed in white satin, with a childish face and dark brown steady eyes. The picture was so artless and noble, the

harmony so delightful, that Angel stopped short with an exclamation of delight.

The Ambassadress smiled. 'That is my lord's father,' she said; 'we brought the picture from Genoa,' and then she opened the door of the last room in the suite. It was the prettiest of all perhaps, and furnished with grey hangings, with French chairs and cabinets full of china. Great pots of crimson pomegranate flowers stood in the windows, in one of which a lady was sitting, sunk on a low step, with a little girl on her knee. The child's arm was round the lady's neck—their two heads were very close together.

They both looked up startled. The little girl sprang away, and the lady half rose to meet the Ambassadress.

'Here is a new friend, Diana,' said Lady W., as she came in, leading Angelica by the hand; then coldly to the child, 'Judith, you have been troubling your cousin. Why are you not in the garden with your sisters?'

The little girl looked up with a face curiously like the Vandyke, and the brown eyes that he had painted. She prepared to pass her mother with a sliding curtsey, and another to Angelica. But the latter took her hand.

'Your mama is kind enough to say I may try and paint your picture, my dear,' she said, in her broken English. 'I hope you will not mind sitting to me.'

The little girl blushed up, suddenly pulled her hand away, and with another curtsey left the room.

'What a beautiful little girl,' said Angelica.

'You must paint her and make friends with her,' said Lady W., impressively. 'It is only those who are leading real, true existences who can be true friends to one's children. I should wish to bring up mine to lead lives such as yours.' Then turning to the lady, she said in an altered voice, 'You know I do not wish Judith to spend her play-time idly, Diana. It is vastly more profitable for her to join her sisters' games, and to have a definite object in view, than to idle away the hours. I have already learnt much from this dear young friend. Would that my children could be educated as she has been,' and she turned to Angelica, who felt somewhat confused and less grateful than she might have been for the Ambassadress's good opinion.

'There are a great many things in my life which are neither useful nor particularly improving,' said the girl, laughing.

Lady Diana fixed her eyes upon Lady W. 'I called Judith in,' she said curtly. 'I had not seen her for two days, and, as you were out, I imagined she would not be wanted.'

Lady W. opened her big fan, and looked away for an instant. Lady Diana set her pale lips, and went on

with her book. Angelica wondered what it was all about.

Just at this moment the Ambassador opportunely came in. He was introduced to the young painter, to whom he made a preoccupied bow. He pulled out his watch. 'The dinner is getting spoiled, my lady,' he said. 'Half-an-hour late; half-an-hour behind the time.'

He seemed younger than his wife. He was a short, stout, good-humoured little man, in a grand blue velvet coat, an with a good many curious nervous tricks. He used to start suddenly from his chair and put something straight at the other end of the room, and come back again and go on with his conversation. He was very particular about time, too, and seemed to spend a great deal in ascertaining exactly how it passed. Details seemed to him the most important facts of life. There was nothing in the least mysterious or vibrating in this member of the establishment, but the two ladies and the solemn little girls were certainly unlike any one Angelica had ever lived with before.

'Order the dinner to be served,' said the lady; 'I shall not detain you any longer.' Then she took Angelica up into her own room to take off her things. Angel composedly laid her shabby black scarf upon point and satin, opened her blue eyes into a tortoise-shell mirror, smoothed her brown hair with a golden comb, and wiped her fingers upon the finest fringed linen.

The girl was timid, but she was of an artistic nature, and she found that palaces and splendour came naturally enough to her. She enjoyed it all, and felt it her right to be there. More experienced women suddenly thrown into such high company might have found themselves less in place than my bright and gentle-mannered heroine, as she looked about and compared the facile comfort in which some lives move to the rough roads that others travel. Here was every ease of body, every pleasure of mind, present to smooth the journey of life. Swift gondoliers waiting their orders at the garden gate; servants in attendance; the waters flowing to cool the air: whereas at home at this very moment her father was sitting down to a cracked dish and a half-filled flagon, while Antonio perhaps. . . . But she had little time to moralize—a voice from below began calling, 'Judith! Judith!' It was the hungry and impatient Ambassador anxious to conduct his wife to dinner.

'Well, what have you done—where have you been?' said Antonio and old John Joseph together as Angelica walked into their little sitting-room that evening. The lamp was burning, and the two men were both busy at the table. Antonio was making decorative designs for a loggia, old Kauffmann was—if the truth must be confessed—nailing a pair of soles on to his buckled shoes; he could

turn his hand to many things, and was by habit and instinct economical and of a saving turn.

Angelica sank down into a chair by the open window, looked at one and then at the other, laughed out gaily at their anxious faces.

'Don't look so solemn,' she said; 'I have had a most delightful day,' and she jumped up, and flung her arms round her father. 'Oh, papa! they have been so good, so kind,' she said; 'you cannot think how they admire my paintings; and they are longing to know you better—the grand Milady said so; and I am to paint three pictures before they leave next month—my lord's (oh, he is so noble and so kind!) and that sweet lady and their enchanting little girl. I shall paint them as Venus and Cupid, with a bow and an arrow;' said Angelica meditatively, 'she is charmed with the idea. There is only one person in that house I do not like, and who did not approve of my intention.'

'Do you mean that black mute I saw in the gallery?' said Antonio, looking from his work, over which he had been effectedly bending.

'I do not know who you mean,' said Angelica, reddening. 'Is it M. de Horn? He does not live there, though he came after dinner. He is in mourning for his mother; he told me so; he is not black, nor is he mute,' and then she regained her temper and smiled. 'I assure you that he can pay the most charmingly turned compliments.'

'That I do not doubt,' said Antonio sarcastically 'and who, then, is the one thorn in your bed of roses?'

'She is his Excellency's cousin,' said Angelica. 'Lady Di; they call her Di—is it not an ugly name?'

'I can well believe that Di is not so pretty as Angelica,' said old Kauffmann proudly.

'And that Angelica knows it well enough,' said Antonio His voice was harsh and grating, his *rr*'s rolled, his sentences ended like the sound of a drum, but Angel was not afraid of him. Sometimes, poor fellow, he longed to make her fear him, in despair of any other hold upon this sweet and wayward creature.

Wayward was scarcely the word to apply to the young painter; but she was different to different people. The people she loved knew her really as she was—constant and unchanging; the people who loved her, alas! saw Angelica as she chose to let them see her.

With all her sweetness of disposition, her kindness of nature, they instinctively felt, they knew not why, that some light barrier lay between them—intangible, insurmountable. Half her life was real and practical, and inspired by good sense; the other half she spent in a world of her own creating—so Antonio said. She placed her friends there, saw them enacting the parts she had bestowed upon them—some heroic, some sentimental; she would allow them no others in her mind—she herself, spoiled child that she was, ruled in this kingdom—almost

believed in its existence. Once when she was young and romantic she had even thought that she might have shared her reign there, and that Antonio, dressed, curled, successful as he deserved to be, dear, discontented old friend, might have been the king of her fancy land; but that was years ago, when she was fifteen, before her mother died, and before she knew the world as she now did. And yet Antonio need not have been so jealous, no one had supplanted him. Never was sentiment more distant from a maiden's heart than from Angelica's; if, as she said, sentiment there was, it was for Nature only, reflected through her own mind or by other people's light. It was feeling for the painted sunlight within the walls of the old palaces and churches, for the golden stream without; for the evening and the morning, and the noble ascension of midday when the shadows struck straight and black, when the pigeons with a flash flew across the basking piazza, when the bells swung their multitudinous clappers, awakening the people asleep, among the steps and archways; it was for Tintoret sometimes; for Titian always; for glorious daylight or for starry night upon the water; for the moon now rising from beyond the Great Canal in front of their windows, 'hushing itself with silver silence.' One moon-ray gleamed upon the flagon of wine old Kauffmann was bringing out for their supper.

These people supped Venetian fashion, at about ten o'clock, and Angelica stood thoughtfully looking at their

meal of bread and fruit and of cold fish served in a cracked Riviera dish that Antonio had once brought home from old Morosco's store.

'Do you remember,' she said, 'when we dined with my uncle Michael, in his farmhouse, and the goatsherd came in and sat beside me and I complained? Who would have thought then that I should sit next an Ambassador at table, father?'

'And who will say that you may not have to dine with a goatsherd again?' said Antonio smiling.

'I prefer the Ambassador,' said Miss Angel saucily. Then she went on, gaily, 'I am to go to market to-morrow morning, the Ambassadress has set her heart upon coming with me.'

CHAPTER V.

GOLD AND SILVER FISH.

The Cima was in the sky next morning when Angelica opened her eyes; she went to the window. A dawn of burnished aromatic light had gathered round the sleeping town, whose domes and campaniles struck with sharp distinctness upon the sky. San Zaccaria and San Marco were receiving their silent morning benediction. Then the bells ring, the light brightens. In Venice the sun rises to the sound of a trumpet, and the new day is ushered in triumphant to a delightful reverberating clamour of bells and voices and cries from every quarter of the town. Angelica dressed herself to a gay variety of music. Her father called her into the little sitting-room, and they breakfasted together at a table by the open window. In floods the sunshine, warm and comforting; the sumptuous lights glittering from the Grand Canal make diversion on the shabby walls of the little room. There are grapes for their breakfast, new loaves, and cups of coffee, for which

old Kauffmann is famous, and now it is time for Angelica to seek her protectress again. The old father calls a gondola, goes with her to the door, as is his custom, and sends her in with a blessing.

When Angelica reached the palace, she found that the Ambassadress was still in her room, closeted with her maid; piles of silk and satin robes and mufflers were lying in disgrace upon the chairs; the lady's temper is also somewhat ruffled—the maids are in despair; Angelica herself is hastily dismissed; no one can suit my lady's taste that morning. They cannot understand this fancy; nothing is plain enough in all the vast assortment; a black petticoat without fringe or trimming, a chintz wrapper, a plain lace veil—with some difficulty these things are brought from depths of lumber drawers.

Angelica, after wandering about the empty rooms, exchanging a stiff greeting with Lady Di, her antagonist, settled down at last in the corner of the great marble hall, where her easel had been set by Lady W.'s desire. My lord, on his way to his gondola, stopped for a minute to greet the young painter; he is followed by his little daughter, who runs out through one of the great windows which open to the terraced gardens outside. They are lined with orange-trees, growing in the great pots of Italian clay, there are two ilex-trees, of which the leaves are showering pointed shadows, some crisp, some delicately reticulated upon the avenues.

'Diana the elder is sitting on some marble steps; little Charlotte, Lady W.'s second daughter, is coming across the avenue. Little Judith has picked her cousin a handful of sweet verbena leaves, and goes and sits beside her on the low step with folded hands. Angelica looks up from her ideal Paradise, and sees the two sitting there among laurel shadows and ilex winds in this quaint and peaceful garden. She straightway weaves it all up into some picture in her mind, adds a column, a drapery makes up some feeble composition, as she has been taught to do. Antonio would tell me to add nothing—to paint them as they are, thinks Angelica. But that is only Antonio's craze. Caracci and Guido, my great masters, have taught me to see the ideal beauty that reality suggests; and once more she falls to work upon her poor little flimsy fancies—cut paper flowers upon the altars of art. It is at any rate a peaceful state of mind in which the young painter works on, listening from afar to the voices from the city; when they cease there is the sound of the fountain plashing with a tender persistent lap, and brimming to the edge of the little stone basin; sometimes she hears the voices of the servants at their work, sometimes the fall of an oar comes to her with the fountain's ripple. If Angelica stretches from her corner, she sees the palaces clustering white, and the line of water very blue beyond the brown piles of brick and

straggling sprays of ivy. The bushes shed their aromatic perfume, the lights struggle through the massed green leaves.

From time to time the little Charlotte comes up to peep at Angelica's paintbox—at the steady paint-brush working on; then she runs back: her very steps stir sleeping perfumes among the leaves. These strange sweet scents from the garden are a poem in themselves, now fresh, now ravishing into utter fragrance. The child becomes impatient presently; she pulls a long branch, and begins to beat at all this sleeping monotony.

'Take care, child; what are you about?' cries a voice less modulated than usual. Little Charlotte runs away frightened, and the Ambassadress, somewhat put out by the difficulties of her toilet, appears upon the terrace issuing from a side door, and stands, tapping her little foot impatiently, at the window where Angel is at work.

'Are you ready?' said Angel, looking up. She had the rare gift of never losing her presence of mind, and other people's flurries did not affect her greatly.

'I have had endless difficulties with my dress,' said Lady W., who was indeed strangely transformed. 'See here, Diana; shall I be recognised? What will be thought of me, if I am recognised?'

'That you do not look near so well as usual,' said Lady Diana, coming up.

'But why should you not be recognised? said Angelica, painting on.

'A basket!' cried Lady W., suddenly, without listening to either of them. 'Do, child, go and ask Mrs. Meadows for a basket. I will carry a basket on my arm, and, my sweet Kauffmann, you can make the purchases. Ah! Diana! I know who ought to be with us. Why is not Mr. Reynolds of the party?'

'Because he is in England, and better employed,' said the matter-of-fact Lady Di, very shortly

The gondola was waiting as usual at the corner; it took them but a very little way, and landed them on the quay near the Rialto. Lady W. glided out, followed by Angelica. The pavement was, as usual, crowded. The sun was deliciously white and hot, and a man with a great fruit basket stood opposite the broad steps that led from the water. Angel knew her way across the bridge, with all the people crowding so lazily and swinging their slow-measured pace, which seems to float with the waters of the canal. A woman stops short, leans over the rail, and slowly eats a bunch of grapes, dropping the stems into the water. Then they come into a beautiful arched and Byzantine shadow (how many hundred years old is the shadow?). A dishevelled statue, with black hair and a wan brown face, is leaning against a well. As Angelica passed with her companion, the figure moved its rags and looked hard into their faces. They seem to cross a cen-

tury of centuries, as they pass under deep-blue skies, and so through back streets come into the market.

All the pictures out of all the churches were buying and selling in this busy market; Virgins went by, carrying their Infants; St. Peter is bargaining his silver fish; Judas is making a low bow to a fat old monk, who holds up his brown skirts and steps with bare legs into a mysterious black gondola that had been waiting by the bridge. It now silently glides away. Lady W. was enchanted, admired, and exclaimed at everything.

'Now for our marketing,' she said. 'Angelica, where does one buy fish?' As she spoke she suddenly exclaimed at a girl who came quietly through the crowd, carrying her head nobly above the rest, and looking straight before her with a sweet and generous face. 'What a beautiful creature! Brava, brava!' shrieked Lady W. The girl hung her sweet head and blushed. Titian's mother, out of the 'Presentation,' who was sitting by with her basket of eggs, smiled and patted the young Madonna on her shoulder. 'They are only saying good things; they mean no harm,' said the old woman.

Then a cripple went along on his crutches; then came a woman carrying a beautiful little boy, with a sort of turban round his head. Angelica put out her hand and gave the child a carnation as he passed. One corner of the market was given up to great hobgoblin pumpkins; tomatos were heaped in the stalls; the oranges and limes

were not yet over; but perhaps the fish-stalls were the prettiest of all. Silver fish tied up in stars with olive-green leaves, golden fish, as in miracles, with noble people serving them. There are the jewellers' shops too, but their wares do not glitter so brightly as all this natural beautiful gold and silver. Lady W. bought fish, bought fruit. She would have liked to carry home the whole market.

There was one little shop where an old Rembrandt-like Jew was installed among crucifixes, crystals, old laces, buckles, and gimcracks of every description. A little silver chain hanging in a case in the window took the Ambassadress's fancy. 'I should vastly like a talk with that picturesque old man,' said she. 'Did you ever see anything so venerable?'

Angelica smiled. 'I know him very well; he is one of my patrons. His name is Giuseppe Morosco; he has a fine house upon the Grand Canal, all full of beautiful things.'

The two ladies made their way into the shop with some difficulty, for the place was narrow and crowded with things. Angelica shook hands with the old broker quite unaffectedly; he was surprised to see her come to buy instead of to sell. When she asked the price of the silver beads, the old Rembrandt brought out a pair of glistening brass scales, in which he gravely weighed the chain. A priest and an old wife came from a corner of the inner

shop to watch; the bargain might have been prolonged, if Lady W. had not put down a bit of shining gold upon the old brown counter.

'You must always wear this chain for my sake, and in remembrance of to-day,' she said, turning to Angel, and with her quick gentle hands she flung the silver beads over the young girl's head.

For an instant the silver flashed in the darkness, then the silk broke, and the shower fell all about the room.

'You see your kindness is everywhere,' said Angelica, gratefully, as she stooped to gather the rolling beads from the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

ANGEL AND HER FRIENDS.

The Ambassadress was charmed with the girl—her sweetness, her intelligence, and bright artistic soul. This lady, who was not troubled by much diffidence of judgment, invested whatever she took an interest in with a special grace, and the persons who frequented her intimacy invariably responded to her lead. Count de Horn, that silent and somewhat melodramatic personage, seemed usually too much absorbed by his hostess when he called to notice any one else, but he gravely allowed that the Kauffmann was charming. His Excellency, who always followed his wife's lead, was enthusiastic too, and, busy as he was comparing watches and arranging everybody's affairs, he found time to have his picture painted by the girl, upon whose shoulders his lovely wife had cast her own glamorous mantle. So it happened that Angelica Kauffmann, a painter's daughter, had become the friend and com-

panion of no less a person than the wife of the English Ambassador in Venice. She found herself suddenly adopted by this impatient and beautiful woman, and introduced into a world of which she had only suspected the existence before, although she may have sometimes invented it for herself in former day dreams. She painted the Ambassadress and the children. Lady Diana did not like her pictures, and would not have her portrait taken, so the Ambassadress told Angelica (and Lady Diana's manner plainly corroborated the statement); but whatever poor Lady Diana may have felt, the Ambassadress was unfailing in kindness.

The damask gondola would come at all hours of the day, silently sliding to steps near the little house where Angelica was living. Old John Joseph was not unaware of the advantages to be derived from such patronage. This was not the first time that they had lived with great people. Had not Angelica painted Monsignor Nevroni, at Como? His Eminence the Cardinal Bishop of Constance? Had they not stayed with him in his palace, and been treated as guests? Was not Angelica conferring a favour upon those who patronised her? Had not the great Winkelman accorded her distinguished interest and friendship when they met on their travels? No one who ever knew her passed her by unnoticed; she was his work, old Kauffmann would say—the daughter and pride of his old age

Antonio's sarcastic forebodings would be cut very short by the old man.

'Eh! it is good for her to make friends; now is the time; she will get magnificent orders. You can't give her orders, Antonio, my poor fellow; you never get one from year's end to year's end.'

The old painter had failed himself, and did not disguise his failure. He was ambitious now for his Angel; in some vague way he had come to consider her works and her success his own. When people praised her, and wondered at her courage and application, her father tacitly assumed the whole credit. 'A good girl—good girl,' he would say. 'She has inherent genius, and she has been carefully taught; but she must work and deserve her success;' and the girl sweet, bright, obedient, wilful at times, but accustomed to the parental rule, never thought of rebelling against the somewhat arbitrary decisions, which condemned her to such unremitting toil. She loved her work—she was not afraid of fatigue; her health was delicate, but she was of good constitution, full of life and vitality, and able to endure. Her temper was a little wilful perhaps to other people, but she bore her father's reproofs with the greatest sweetness. His love made it all only a part of love, and when he admired, and thought her work marvellous, Angel only said humbly to herself that there was never such a tender foolish old father as hers, and she would laugh and make some happy little joke, and go her way unscathed.

The old priests, too, with their solemn hyperboles and compliments, had all seemed so much a matter of course that she never seriously attended to any one of their long-winded laudations. They seemed as much a matter of course as the scroll on the frames of her picture. But this new state of things was very different. She felt curiously excited—unlike herself; she was a credulous woman; surely there was some meaning in all these compliments, in M. de Horn's expressive looks, and Lady W.'s unconcealed admiration. It was a new experience altogether—delightful, intoxicating. The sweet English voices with guttural notes struck her ear very pleasantly; it seemed to Angelica like the sound of the water answering to the oar.

She had made more money in this last week than in all the month she had been at work in the gallery before; but she felt as if she loved these kind new friends for their kindness far more than for what she could gain from them. Those *occhi azzurri*, of which her old friend wrote, so bright, so placid, danced with happiness; it was all new, all delightful. When she was tired of sitting, and being painted, Angelica's patroness would carry her off on long expeditions from church to church, from picture to picture. It was a curious restless love of art that seemed to possess Lady W., and one which Angelica could not altogether understand. But however this might be, life, which had been somewhat of a struggle for existence

hitherto, suddenly became complete in itself and easy to Angelica: she seemed to have found some new power of seeing and feeling and enjoyment; the very works of art seemed to gain in beauty and in meaning. It is almost impossible to write the charm of some of those long days following one by one, floating from light to light, moons and stars slowly waning, to tender break of dawn, melody of bells calling to the old churches with the green weeds drifting from their lintels and crannies.

Are they falling into ruin, those old Italian churches? Are the pictures fading from their canvas in the darkened corners? I think they have only walked away from their niches in the chapels into the grass-grown piazzas outside. There is the broad back of Tintoretto's Virgin in that sunny corner; her pretty attendant train of angels are at play upon the grass. There is Joseph standing in the shadow with folded arms. Is that a bronze—that dark lissom figure lying motionless on the marble step that leads to the great entrance. The bronze turns in its sleep; a white dove comes flying out of the picture by the high altar with sacred lights illumined; or is it only one of the old sacristan's pigeons coming to be fed? By the water-beaten steps a fisherman is mooring his craft. St. John and St. James are piling up their store of faggots. In this wondrous vision of Italy, when the church-doors open wide, the saints and miracles come streaming out into the world. . . .

One day the Ambassadress, who had scarcely been satisfied about Antonio, mentioned him again, and began asking rather curiously who he was, and whether Angelica was certain that she was not engaged to him in any way?

'Antonio! He is always with us. He is much too cross ever to fall in love with anybody, or for anybody to think of falling in love with him. My father once had some idea of the sort, but Antonio entreated him never to mention anything so absurd again. I may never marry, and anyhow—it would be great waste to marry such a true friend as Antonio.'

'Listen, Angelica,' said the Ambassadress, very earnestly. 'If you marry, it must be somebody worthy of you, somebody who will be a real companion and a new interpreter of life—not Mr. Antonio, not M. de Horn (who admires you extremely, as you know very well, you wicked child; even Milady Di, who never sees anything, was struck by his manner). But no, there is someone you have never seen, whom I will not name. I have had a dream, child—I saw you both ruling together in a noble temple of art. My dear creature, I had a letter from the nameless gentleman this morning—a charming letter—he asks many questions about you. There is a picture he wishes you not to miss seeing on any account; come, let us go and look at it. You shall judge whether or not he has good taste in art.'

Angelica wondered where they were going to, and

could not help speculating a little as to this unknown cicerone who seemed to have directed their morning's expedition.

'I approve of your friend's taste,' said the young painter, when the gondola stopped at the steps leading to the church of the Frari, where they had first met.

'He does not mean your great Assumption,' said Lady W.; 'it is of another picture that he writes; it is in another chapel. How shall we find it? who shall we ask?'

'It must be here,' said Angelica, without troubling herself to ask, and she led the way straight to a side chapel.

'How do you know?—Yes, this must be the picture,' said Lady W., referring to a letter; 'some inspiration must have told you. "Grandeur and simplicity," he writes —that tells one nothing. Yes, to be sure; "The Virgin's Altar; St. Peter with an open book; . . ."'

'This is the picture, of course,' said Angelica; and the girl looks up, the noble Pesari heads bend in reverent conclave before the gracious and splendid Madonna. How measured and liberal it all is; what a stately self-respect and reverence for others. She feels it, and yet can scarce grasp the impression before her. Her breath came quickly—a hundred fancies rose before her eyes.

'I wish I could paint you as you look now, child, and send the picture back to my friend in return for his letter,' said Lady W., with a gentle playful tap of her fan.

For once Angelica was provoked by the interruption; a moment more, and it seemed to her that something might have come to her, some certainty that she had never reached. She turned with vague eyes and looked at her protectress.

The little room had been looking very empty and deserted without Angelica that evening. The two men worked on in silence. Miss Angel was away among her grand acquaintances. 'Perhaps she might come home presently, absorbed, pre-occupied as usual; she might not even like to find him there,' thought poor Antonio bitterly.

Presently he raised his head, and starting from his seat, ran down the narrow stairs. Old John Joseph was hammering, and had heard nothing, but Antonio had caught the plash of the oars and the echo of Angelica's voice. The boat came up to the steps, and particles of streaming moonlight seemed to glisten under Angel's feet as she came from the boat, carefully assisted by M. de Horn in his Hamlet-like garb.

Then the boat slid off once more with many gentle good-nights and cautions from the lady glistening and glittering in the shadowy seat.

'Tell your father I will hear of no denial, my sweet Angel,' said the lady; 'you must positively bring me his consent to-morrow. Good-night my dearest creature.' Then the Count's 'good-night, madam,' in a deep voice

that seemed to echo into the night. The oars dropped slowly into the water, and Antonio and Angelica stood for a moment silent and alone.

'What did she mean?' he asked suspiciously.

Angelica's heart was very full. Cross as Antonio was at times, she trusted him sincerely. She seized his hand and cried, 'Oh, Antonio, advise me; I know so little. You know these dear and noble people. Yes, they are good and generous, are they not? They will be true friends, will they not? You were not in earnest, were you, when you warned me against them? Tell me. Shall I go to England, Antonio? The Ambassadress will take me there with her—will establish me there, and introduce me to her acquaintances. The people here love art. They praise me, they are good to me; but money is hard to win, and my father and I can hardly live by our talents. In England, so they tell me, I should earn enough for him, for myself, for all our wants. Look,' and she opened her hand, and some gold glistened in the moonlight; 'and this is only a part of what I have earned this week. It is more than I received from the Cardinal Bishop himself. Antonio, you must come too. We will all go to England and grow rich, and then some day we will return to our beloved Italy and enjoy the fruits of our labour.'

'You will never come back if you once go there,' said Antonio, and he held her hand, in which the gold still

lay shining, and with his long fingers folded hers over upon it. 'Don't let me see it,' he said, with some sudden spasm; 'they have bought you. It is your life, and your soul, and your art that you are selling. You give up your friends, your tranquil life, to seek all this excitement, and vanity, and folly. Go, Angelica. You women are all alike; you cannot live without admiration, and lies, and flattery.' He was trembling with emotion and his tone was full of reproach.

'Oh, Antonio!' said Angelica, with her gentle voice stopping his angry burst. She was so sweet and innocently trustful that night that he could not go on; it was only when she resented his scoldings that he had the courage to continue them. There was a moment's silence between them; he still held her hand.

'You are right to distrust me,' he said, suddenly letting it fall. 'I am a bad adviser, Angelica. I am jealous of your success. Yes! I *am* jealous. I do wish you to stay here—obscure, unspoiled, unflattered; dressed not as you are now in that woman's silks and satins, but in your shabby gown, of which each darn is dear to me and honourable to you who wear it. I would keep you if I could,' he said, with a harsh voice, that suddenly failed and broke. . . .

I do not think Angelica understood him in the least. 'You talk so strangely,' she answered; 'but you will never make me believe you are jealous of your poor little

friend. If you had had all my advantages, all the teaching and . . . .'

Antonio began to laugh. 'We shall never agree about art,' he said. 'Come, your father is expecting you; come and tell him your news.'

Antonio's heart was very heavy as he followed Angelica across the moonlight terrace. 'Oh Antonio, what will my father say?' she exclaimed falteringly. Antonio knew only too well what had been in old Kauffmann's mind all along. Angelica feared to tell him and shrank from the thought of parting, but John Joseph had hoped from the first that some such scheme might be suggested. What was the pain of temporary parting, compared to such a prospect for his daughter? Angelica was to travel to England in the Ambassador's train, in comfort, honour, and doubtless without expense. It would be folly to refuse so good an offer.

'Folly, folly, my Angel,' repeated the old man. 'It is agony to part; but we have self-control. I can judge for you, my child, with sense and experience of life. Believe me, it is best.'

'Yes, father,' said Angelica cheerfully, but great bitter tears were gathering in her eyes, and they glittered in the moonlight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARMENIAN CONVENT.

It was the last day of Angelica's stay at Venice, and Antonio had brought a boat to row them once more out towards the Lido. It was not a gondola, but a common rowing-boat, belonging to a fisherman, a friend of his. They were very sad, but very happy somehow.

The boat travelled slowly. Old Kauffmann and his daughter sat side by side on the low seat; she had clasped his arm with her hand.

'Papa, you will come—you will not delay?' she said.

'No, child, I will not delay,' he answered; but in his heart the wily old painter thought that Angelica would be well and happy living under the care of those grand signori. He would not hurry—he would take his time. His business called him to Coire, to Morbegno. It was for her good, and he did not shrink from the sacrifice; but it was hard to make. He felt that he was a man

who did not shrink from pain when it was for her benefit, and he sighed.

'Father, why do you sigh?' said Angelica; 'you have some plan that you keep from me—some wicked scheme, confess,'—and the reproachful blue eyes looked into his.

'No, my child,' said John Joseph, very gently. 'Antonio will tell you that I have no hidden scheme. He is coming when I come. We have quite settled to travel together,'—and he patted her hand.

'Yes, I am coming,' said Antonio from his oars.

Sometimes water and sky and light and soul meet in one happy climax. So it seemed to these people that lovely autumn evening. The convent stands upon an island, and they reach it as the sun is setting crimson over the Enganean hills; wide stretches the Lagoon, wide stretches the evening; the great flame-like lines of the two horizons meet in some new and wondrous glory. Antonio rowed on steadily, the island comes into sight, and the convent cupola, and they float up by the old crimson wall, over which some dark heads are watching for the boat, and some great red pomegranate flowers are hanging in clusters.

The sunset is crimson too, and so are the waters which toss them along the steps, where an Armenian monk is standing in his straight-cut dress. As Antonio rowed up another boat flashed past with its gay hangings and rowers, a voice cried out a gay 'Good-night!'

The Ambassadress, her little daughter, Lady Diana, and de Horn were all sitting under the awning; de Horn bowed low; Angelica blushed, and waved her hand in answer to their greetings.

'Do you wish to go back with them?' said Antonio, frowning. 'You are ashamed of my fish-boat.'

'Antonio, you are absurd,' said Angelica, justly provoked. 'I want to stay with my father this last evening.'

It was a strange place they had come to in the midst of this great shining plain of sea—this convent standing in the garden. The evening light had begun to shine upon the walls and the cupola and its golden cross. Everything here seemed splendid and ascetic somehow—crimson and silent. The pupils in their little olive gowns stood about the walls watching the sunset; the great red flowers growing along the avenues, the balsaams and oleander trees, seemed gulping in the light as it flowed triumphant across the answering floods. The monks came out, reserved, dark-robed, quietly contained, and waited upon the terrace. Nature flashed sumptuous and impulsive, while these human beings stood watching in silence.

The Prior of the convent advanced slowly, followed by a brother. He wore a streaming purple stole over his black robe and passed on. The brother who had admitted the little party greeted Antonio as an old acquaintance, and told him his designs were being executed to the general satisfaction of the community. Then he

looked at Angelica with his peaceful face, neither sunset nor sunrise reflections were in it, but a tranquil evening calm.

'See how the west is shining through the avenue,' he said. 'I have seen many beautiful sunsets here these twenty years,' and he raised his hand and pointed down a cypress walk. The dark branches seemed to smite the vast serenity overhead.

As the monk spoke in his quiet voice, Angelica looked at him curiously with her blue eyes. They had come out upon one of the shady terraces. She was standing by a great tree that cast some faint aromatic incense from its many blossoms; her hair was shining, her white gown glowed with prismatic colours.

The brother stopped for a minute, resting his arms on the wall.

'I do not envy your Venice,' he said reflectively. 'It is too much in the world; too full of life, noise, and distraction.'

Angelica looked at him, wondering and sympathetic. 'I think I understand your feeling now,' she said, thoughtlessly. 'But in twenty years there are so many sunsets.'

The brother looked at her and blushed up. 'All day long we work at the task we have undertaken; of an evening we come out to breathe the air,' he said; 'the sunsets have never seemed too many to me;' and he walked on somewhat offended.

'It would not suit you to stay here, Angelica,' Antonio said, lingering beside her. 'You could not bear to spend your life peacefully, watching the changes from the terrace.'

'Would it not suit me? Antonio, we are not all made alike;' and she looked hard at him, trying to be clear, to explain her meaning.

Then she suddenly remembered how the day was burning up, the last day of her old familiar life. Some sudden terror overwhelmed her. She looked at her old father, and could have cried, but that would have distressed him, and she restrained her tears.

'Just now, at this minute,' she said, 'I feel as if I should like to wait and wait, and to put off to-morrow, oh! for so long a time; but if I lived here always, one day I think something would come down like a cloud and hide all the glory, and a voice in my heart would cry out with reproach, "Angelica, for shame! go forth! why have you missed your vocation?" I must take courage' she said, with a sigh, and she turned away from them to hide her tears. Old John Joseph looked over the wall into the water. Antonio could hear his low sobs; but it was Angelica he followed after a moment's hesitation.

'Dear Angelica, don't be unhappy,' the young man said, kindly; 'you are quite right; you have decided wisely. You must forgive me for having troubled you. It was but prejudice and jealousy of those fine people—

unworthy of me and of you. I daresay they are better than I think them. Trust me,' he said, and his thin face gathered some colour, and his pale looks flashed into earnestness. 'I will take care of your father; and when I am with him you know that he has a son.'

'I do know it, Antonio,' said Angelica, gratefully; and she put her hand into his.

They rowed home very quietly, watching a sumptuous panther-like cloud now floating in the west. Nobody spoke. The ripples and gleams of the Lagoon grew wider and more serene, reaching from the present into the coming night. . . . .

The gods seemed to be there invisible. Ariadne herself seemed translated into the moment, and her crown of pale stars began to shine overhead.

Before they reached home, a great red moon, splendid and sorrowful, the last glory of that long day, mounted quietly from beyond the islands.

Afterwards, in later days, Angelica used to look back to these old times with a strange half-mournful longing.

Kauffmann felt that his grief at parting from his daughter next day was to be expressed by no vulgar leave-taking, but by a solemn farewell on the little Piazza at Mestre, where travellers were used to meet their carriages. With all the company looking on, he was glad to be able to bless Angelica, and to burst into

tears under the very eyes of the Ambassador, and amid all the bustle and audience which belonged to the state of the great English nobleman—gondolas arriving at the starting point, couriers, porters staggering with heavy luggage, in which my lady's beautiful clothes were packed; my lord himself swearing, if the truth must be confessed, and stamping about in a pair of huge boots; Lady Diana standing a little apart, with a book in her hand, while her maid and her man-servant scolded and superintended the packing of her carriage. The children were come, and stood in a shy cluster by their governess, with travelling hoods tied under their chubby faces.

Everyone and everything was ready for the start except old Kauffmann, who had not yet taken leave, and her ladyship, who was late. She had sent word that the first carriageful should start without her, but this my lord would not hear of.

Angelica's heart was heavy enough now that the moment of parting was come. She made the best of it, however, knowing her father's susceptibility. 'We shall see Verona, father, and Genoa and the south of France; and we shall stop at Paris,' she said, wistfully looking at the loved haggard face. 'We will go there together coming back; and tell Antonio he is to come too. Where is Antonio?'

'Here he is,' said Zucchi, stepping forward from behind.

'Ah, my child, at your age you may well have hope, said John Joseph, shaking his head; 'but at mine, who shall say what a day may bring forth?'

Angelica turned very pale. 'Oh, father, why should you talk so sadly? Heaven has been good to us always,' she faltered. 'Together or apart, dearest dear, it is the same Providence that will keep us that has given to me my kind father, and to you your little Angelica, who loves you so.' She clung to his arm as she spoke. At that moment the Ambassadress at last arrived in her gondola, stately and collected, chiefly concerned for the comfort of a small dog she carried under her arm. Everybody uncovered, and made way for the great lady.

'Here is my faithful muse!' she said, and gaily greeted Angelica, with a very unconcerned nod to old Kauffmann, who immediately stepped up to her with tearful eyes and clasped hands, and would have gladly made a long and moving speech if he had had opportunity. Lady W—— seemed much too absorbed to listen. There was no time to lose. The Ambassador laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, and said, very kindly, 'My lady will have good care of your daughter, M. Kauffmann. Don't be disturbed about her.' And then, as the old fellow broke into hysterical grief, he added, somewhat perplexed, 'You know, if you repent your consent, it is not to late for you to keep her even now.' But terrible as parting was, *not* to part would have been a still

greater misfortune, and old Kauffmann, much alarmed, was silent immediately, and tried to gulp his tears. Antonio felt very angry with him, but forgave him for Angelica's sake.

'Good-bye, Angel,' he said, cheerfully; 'I like your Ambassador; he has a good heart—and don't fear for the old father.'

'Will you give him some Marsala wine for his dinner?' said Angel, with quivering lips.

Then somebody signed to her to get into a carriage. It was Lady Diana's; two more maids, and the younger little girl had already scrambled in. The outriders spurred their horses, the footmen sprang on to the steps, and the whole procession started off along the road to Verona. Angelica eagerly stretched from the window, and followed her father with her eyes, as Antonio led him away; then she fell back into her corner.

Lady Diana did not immediately settle down; she, too, leaned out, looking from the window of the carriage, and as she did so she caught sight of a man's pale face, looking after them, half concealed by an archway. It was Count de Horn. Lady Diana shot a suspicious glance at Angel, who was quietly rubbing away her tears with her handkerchief. For nearly a mile they neither of them spoke. Little Charlotte whispered to her nurse. The wheels rolled on; the tassels and handles jingled and jogged. They were driving along a flat plain bounded

by delicate hills. Nobody looked at them, and for a long way Angelica went on crying; but as there are rainbows in the air, so there are rainbows often shining after tears. Angelica cheered up in a little while, and tried to talk to her companion.

Lady Diana was, however, absorbed in her book, which had just appeared, called *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and did not seem to care to answer her

CHAPTER VIII.

ARCADIA.

People sometimes live together for years apart in peaceful misunderstanding. It is those who are on the border lands of feeling who generally disagree.

Angelica and Lady Diana had enough of sympathy to dislike one another cordially. Lady Diana was not happy with her cousin's wife, and the mere fact of that lady's sudden infatuation for the young painter had set the poor woman against Angelica. Lady W—— not unfrequently took these passing fancies; she had had one once for Diana herself, but that was when she first married, ten years before, when Diana was a girl of seventeen. They neither of them could bestow what the other wanted. Judith wanted admiration, not love; poor Diana wanted love. There was nothing in her to be admired, she sometimes thought, with a sight; but there *was* something to be loved, she used to feel in her heart, although, little by little even that something seemed drying up and

turning to strange bitterness and pain. She had loved her cousin dearly. She had given her heart to the children, and now Judith in a hundred ways seemed to be trying to alienate him and them from her. Diana had always been brought up with her cousin. She was tenderly attached to him, had been used to him all her life, and she might have lived on happily, trusting in his friendship, if Lady W—— would have allowed her to do so. She was not an unreasonable woman, and very little would have made her happy. Lady W—— wanted her to marry Count de Horn—anybody who happened to strike her own fancy; but Lady Diana also had her ideas, and was not to be reasoned out of them. How it all happened that she marred her life I do not know. Perhaps her brusquerie frightened people. They always somehow felt that she was carrying the scales to weigh them in.

Miss Angel looked at her as she sat engrossed in her marble-covered book. She saw a stout, pale-faced person, very much over-dressed (Lady Diana left her clothes to her maid, who was fond of bright colours). She was plain, uninteresting, dull, looking older than she really was, and speaking less kindly than she really felt. One thing only seemed to draw Angelica to her—a curious, indescribable sense of truthfulness of nature and reliability that was like Antonio. Angelica felt thankful at that moment to remember that he was with her father.

Antonio was always as good as his word; he kept with old Kauffmann all that day, and only left him cheered and sitting in the starlight at his favourite wine-stall, with old Pintucci as a companion. Then Antonio went away; he had work to do, and some heaviness of heart to shake off, and he longed to get away and be alone.

The next day a little scrap of pencilled paper came back by one of the returning couriers. It was hastily scrawled over with more good-byes and messages for Antonio. He read them with a half-sarcastic smile. 'She wants me to take care of her father; that is what she means,' he thought; and yet, though he doubted, the little messages were a comfort to him—she was kinder absent, on paper, than present and in words.

But Antonio was morbid where Miss Angel was concerned. He used to contrast her fate and his; he was only some seven years older in years, but how many in feeling, in experience—a long illness and shattered nerves had stood him ten years' experience. His hair at thirty was as grey as old Kauffmann's; his hand trembled at times like an old man's, and his temper was crabbed and uncontrolled; he had no part in life but that of a convenient friend to be taken up, to be put down, to be made use of. It made him furious at times to think of it. Poor Antonio would have gladly been young, handsome, rich, splendid, for her sake; but that was not possible.

It was, however, possible to love her—possible: it was

impossible not to do so. With all her faults, her childish inconsiderateness, her curious hallucinations about herself, and her absurd vanity (which, after all was not to be wondered at), Antonio felt he could not but love her. He was much the prouder of the two, much the more revengeful, much the more self-conscious, if the truth were known. It does not follow because a person is not handsome, or particularly prosperous, or successful in his affairs, that he is to possess every self-denying virtue. Antonio's intellect was in many respects far in advance of his powers, and of Angelica and of the people she lived among: he was constantly chafed by a position which certainly was not equivalent to his abilities. He did not care for money for himself, but he liked to be able to help others, and his want of means was a bitter thorn in the side of a generous and yet orderly man. Although in his heart he felt that no one else in all the world could love her as he would have done, yet there were times when he gladly would have forgotten her if he could. Why was he to waste his good affections upon this careless and light-hearted girl? What had she done to deserve a good man's heart, or an indifferent man's heart, for the matter of that? 'You need not be specially good to suffer,' thought Antonio. He had no intention of succumbing to fate; he had plenty of courage, and meant to make the very best he could of his powers, such as they were; and if he rated himself highly, it was because he was a sensible

man, and knew what was in him. A livelihood was to be made, and he had determined some time before that England was the place to make it in. He had English friends of his own. He had travelled with one of them, an architect, who promised him work in London in the ensuing winter. He should see Angelica then. Ah! where had she travelled to now, on her journey to that unknown country?

The lady of Antonio's dreams had ascended into realms undreamt of by struggling mortals trying to earn their daily bread from day to day. It was a curious experience for the painter-maiden to find herself suddenly one of an important company, progressing with relays of horses, with servants in attendance, putting up in the best rooms of the inns along the road, talking and hearing talk of lords, and palaces, and mansions as if they were things of course. Here were splendid waxlights burning on her dressing-tables, servants at her call, and orders to give almost for the first time in her simple life. She had lived with great people before. When she had been painting the Cardinal at Como, he had asked her to breakfast. The Bishop had invited her to see his pictures, but there had been no real intimacy as now. She might have felt shy but for the Ambassadress's charm of manner, and Angel was too simple and credulous not to trust her companions, whoever they might be, and to believe in all they told her.

The Ambassador was invariably kind; the little girls were delightful. If only her father had been there, Angelica would have had nothing to wish for. They crossed the sun-gilt and bountiful country where the lovely garlands were hanging from branch to branch. Pan sits in a field piping on his two reeds to the peasants. White oxen come up to listen. The vines are heavy with brown fruit, the shadowed chesnut-trees burst from the valley, those mild valleys castle-crowned and billowing to golden forelands. Some indescribable balm, and strength, and ease of heart seems to belong to all these lovely modulations of form and colour. The bridge spanning the stream leads to the town below, to red roofs, vine bowers, from whence the people are looking up. A far-away cottage door opens wide, a woman comes out, and flings a handful of fruit to some children. . . .

The great carriages roll on, shaking and jolting, with the faces at the windows. The distant shadows and hills enclose the golden plains, delicately piled wreath upon wreath, now flying, now enclosing once again. Something seems to sing a *Laus Deo*: 'Accept! accept! open your hearts; open wide your hearts!' is the hymn echoing along the way.

Lady Diana, who had let her book fall, looked round; no one had spoken, it was only her own soul that had cried out.

It was quite dark when they reached Verona, and came to a great busy courtyard, full of hospitality and

confusion. Angel slipped aside unnoticed, and went for a little way along a black and narrow street.

The apertures of the houses were lighted, curtains swung before the doors; the citizens were gossiping within after their day's work. The sky was black and starless, you could scarce distinguish it from the sloping roofs. Angel did not go far, she heard clocks striking in the darkness overhead. She heard the river rushing by the bridge. She felt that life had begun in earnest, and that this strange black veil of darkness hid a future of which she could form no conception as yet. But she would work to please her father, and to fulfil the mission that she felt was hers, and to earn money for them both. She might laugh as others did, and talk and seem to forget, but in her heart she did not forget that it was her aim to strive for beautiful and noble things, to teach others to look up at a high ideal. Antonio should see that this was no idle fancy of the moment.

A sudden tipsy shout from one of the little drinking-houses frightened the young prophetess, and she turned, and ran back as quickly as she could.

'How flushed you look, child,' said Lady W., when Angelica came along the gallery where she was standing with the children.

Window after window was lighted in honour of the Ambassador and his suite. Most of them opened on to the

gallery, and Lady W. was waiting whilst her attendants unpacked and made ready.

'You must remember that you belong to us now; you must not run off alone;' said she, gravely.

'Not go alone!' said Angelica; 'I have been used to go alone all my life.'

'You are a person of consequence now, child,' said Lady W., smiling; 'you must pay your penalty.'

Next morning poor Angelica ventured no farther than the busy courtyard of the inn, although she longed to start off and see the place of which she had heard so much. She watched the people coming and going along the galleries; the oleander-trees in flaming rows. The great cathedral bell was going. A storm was brewing, the white and grey clouds heaving from beyond the roofs. As she stood there she heard a tramping along the wooden gallery; the Ambassador came up with his boots, leading little Judith by the hand. Perhaps he read Angelica's wishes in her eyes, for he asked her if she would accompany them in their morning's walk, and the girl gladly accepted. They went a little way through the streets, between the quaint crowded houses, across a wide piazza, towards a great arched gateway leading from the busy world outside into a silent cathedral. My lord passed in, first taking off his cocked hat, and little Judith tripped beside him Miss Angel had seen many cathedrals; this one seemed to

her to be an after-thought—an echo of those where she had so often knelt by her father's side.

Looking about, they passed on across the marble pavement into a little cloistered court that lay behind the nave. It led to the Baptistery. In this little court were some tombs and slabs engraved with coats-of-arms and inscriptions. A priest was standing thoughtfully absorbed in deciphering one of these flat grave-stones. He looked at Angelica as she passed. It was a kind and troubled face that attracted her strangely, as she looked down from his face to the inscription he had been gazing at.

IN PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS

was rudely carved on the marble slab.

'Patience!' cried Angelica, answering her own thought; 'there are so many things better than patience.'

The Priest looked up surprised. 'Yes, but when other things have failed,' he said in a despairing sort of way, 'then patience is still left to us.'

'No, no!' cried Miss Angel, impetuously; 'hope for something must remain while there is life. Patience is only death, only despair.'

Long after she remembered the little scene—the sad-faced priest, the solemn text, at a time when her own soul seemed failing for fear. But even then Angel was true to her creed. She might despair and die, or live and

strive to hope for better things; but simple blind submission was a thought unbearable to her.

When Angel came back she was surprised to find that Lady W. did not seem to approve of her sight-seeing, although this time she had not again gone alone.

'If you had come to me, I should have taken you myself,' said her patroness.

The journey proceeded in beauty and tranquillity. The weather frowned upon them as they neared the Mediterranean, with its long rolling breakers, its bordering groves and hills. The olives climb the steep acclivities, and from their smoky pyre rise white villages, like pale flames bursting from the summits. They stopped to change horses at a little place called Bordighiera, on the coast of the Mediterranean.

Here the sun came out and the clouds disappeared; a sort of dimmed brightness was everywhere. It lay on the sea, on the village, in a little smiling grove beyond a wall, where a small gate swung upon its hinges, Miss Angel went up a little way along an avenue of lemon and of olives, and breathed the sweet morning pastoral silence. She came to an old ivy-grown well, as she walked, and sat down, resting upon the margin. The pretty pensive figure itself was not unsuggestive, looking thoughtfully down into the water. Her heart beat with hope, with a sort of romantic delight and sweet absurdity. Some peasants passed; a woman carrying a load of leaves

and tendrils of vines, and driving a beautiful white cow with long arched horns.

Then came the shepherd, followed by some goats trotting with tinkling bells, and, lastly, two little children, with goat-skin coats; one had her hands full of leaves and olives.

The youngest was carrying something held carefully against its little breast. The child looked up with two wild eyes at the pretty lady leaning against the old iron clank of the well. Something in her look invited confidence, and he held up a little dead bird as he passed.

'What are you going to do with it?' Angel said, kindly.

'We are going to dig a grave,' said the child. 'It is dead!' and the little thing walked on with careful steps.

When Mrs. Angelica Kauffmann sent her picture to Maiden Lane, it was somewhat pompously entitled 'Shepherd and Shepherdess in Arcadia, moralising at the side of a Sepulchre, while others are dancing in the distance;' but it was some vague remembrance of that morning dream which first suggested it to her.

She is not the only dreamer to whom Arcadia has been revealed. Mightier dreams than hers have reached that mystic country.

'Auch ich in Arkadien,' writes Goethe as a motto to his *Italian Journey*. '*Et in Arcadia ego*,' Sir Joshua has painted on a tomb, in the background of a smiling picture.

'What can this mean?' says Dr. Johnson, looking at Sir Joshua; 'it seems very nonsensical. "I also am in Arcadia."'

'The king could have told you,' says the painter; 'he saw it yesterday, and said at once, "Ay, ay! Death is even in Arcadia!"'

After all, Arcadia would be a sorry, stagnant sort of place without its tombstones. There is death to evil as well as to good, death to pain, and to death itself; when sometimes, with a sudden uplifting of heart in the fulness of time, Faith and Hope seem at last to overflow the barriers that divide us from the unimaginable truth.

CHAPTER IX.

THE 'ANNUAL REGISTER' FOR 1766

To read of the times when Miss Angel came to take up her abode among us is like reading the description of a sort of stately ballet or court dance. Good manners had to be *performed* in those days with deliberate dignity. There is a great deal of saluting and snuff-taking, complimenting and exclaiming; people advanced and retreated, bowing to the ground and balancing themselves on their high heels.

With all the dignity there is also a great deal of noise, of shouting and chattering. There are runners with torches, splendid footmen in green and golden liveries surrounding my lady's chair.

The King of Denmark is entertained in splendid fashion. The Princess of Brunswick visits England. Cornelly lights up Soho Square with wax-candles, while highwaymen hang in chains upon the gallows in distant dark country roads. Our young King George is a bride-

groom, lately crowned, with this powdered and lively kingdom to rule, and Charlotte Regina to help him.

There are great big coaches in the streets, and Mr. Reynolds' is remarked upon with all its fine panels; but Cecilia can still send for a chair when she wishes to be carried to Baker Street; Vauxhall is in its glory and lights up its bowers. Dr. Burney gives musical parties. The cards fly in circling packs; the powder-puffs rise in clouds; bubbles burst. The vast company journeys on its way. In and out of society golden idols are raised; some fall down and worship, others burst out laughing. Some lie resting in their tents, others are weeping in the desert. Pre-eminent among the throngs one mighty shade passes on its way. Is it a pillar of cloud sent to guide the straggling feet of the weary? From the gloom flash rays of light, of human sympathy not unspoken. How many of us still wandering impatient might follow that noble hypochondriac, nor be ashamed of our leader. He walks along, uncertain in his gait, striking alternate lamp-posts, an uncouth figure in soiled clothes, splendid-hearted, with generous help for more than one unhappy traveller lying wounded by the roadside. Do we not read how noble Johnson stoops and raises the prostrate form upon his shoulders, and staggers home to his own house? He has not even an ass to help him to bear the burthen.

The first time that Angelica saw him, she was in her dream of pre-occupation and happiness and excitement:

were the thieves about her even then? The second time she was alone and in sorrow, breaking her sad heart and despairing. Then came to her the shabby feet bringing good tidings, the deep and truthful voice speaking strange comfort, the kind hands raising her and giving her the balm of hope renewed to her bruised soul.

Sir Joshua might assist a friend in sorrow, but he could not give comfort, for he did not realise, as Johnson did, the depths to which a human heart may sink.

Meanwhile Angelica laughs and holds her own. Her thieves, if thieves they are, are well-mannered ones: they pay her compliments, bring her tickets and flowers, invite her to dance and to sing and to all sorts of pleasant things, and ask to have their portraits taken along with their betters. How was she to know them from her real friends? How was she to believe those who warned her? Her very power over others blinded her to their faults, she could make people charming and kind by her own gaiety of heart and out-going grace.

She had not seen very much of the worldly world as yet. Everything was new and full of interest. She watched all the figures go by, but she had no clue by which to form some judgment, and with one accord Angelica's complimentary contemporaries united to dazzle and to blind her. If you had heard the babble of the stream as it passed by Angel's not unwilling ears, the compliments, the half-truths, the exaggerations, you

would have forgiven her for believing not all but too much of what she heard. Compliments were as much part of the manner of the time as the snuff and the powder-puffs.

Miss Burney's Diary gives one a specimen of the good-natured exaggeration.

'The sweetest book!' cries Mrs. Thrale; 'the most interesting! the most engaging! oh, it beats every other book!' 'The most elegant novel I ever read in my life! such a style,' says Lady Saye and Sele. Then Mr. Soame Jenyns breaks forth in a higher strain: 'All creation is open to the authoress; no human being who ever began that book had power to put it down.' Even Miss Burney in her usual modest confusion feels that this is almost beyond her deserts; and takes refuge with the old housekeeper who is coming to the door, and exclaims to her mistress, 'Ah! madame, how happy are you to have Minerva in the house.'

Angel was not Minerva only, but all the heathen divinities combined with all Christian graces, a sort of combination of Muses and Virtues, according to her admirers; of brilliant talents, of frivolity and heartless flirtation, according to her enemies. And Angelica herself? She never thought about herself, but gratefully accepted kindness, hoped, loved, believed, was happy, was miserable, without much method, innocent and unresenting. Rossi describes Angelica at this time as not very tall of stature, but of slight well-proportioned figure; she had a dark clear com-

plexion, a gracious mouth, white and equal teeth, well-marked features. Above all, he says, her azure eyes, so placid and so bright, charmed you with an expression it is impossible to write; unless you had known her, you could not understand how eloquent were her looks.

'Il Ranolds' painted her, continues old Rossi, and Bartolozzi engraved the picture, and she painted herself many times. Sometimes she painted herself happy and brilliant, sometimes old and sad. There is one picture in the dress of her country, when the dimness of life and its troubles had passed over her path; it is all there, marked upon her face in sad and noble lines that detract from her beauty.

The house in Charles Street stood in a little park or garden, which had been deserted for many months; while the house was closed, and the inhabitants were basking in brighter horizons than that of Berkeley Square. Lady W—— had given Angelica two little rooms on the ground floor. The larger and darker was to serve as a bedroom; the second, with its glass doors and delicate inlaid chimney was to be her working place for the present. As soon as she had made her way in the London world, and had earned a little money to start with, she was to be established in a studio of her own; but here for the winter Angelica was well content to put up her canvasses, and to begin work the very first morning after her arri-

val. She was not particular, and she could contentedly settle down in one corner or another. If this one had been a little larger, it would have suited her perfectly. The garden itself was green and neatly kept. Lord W—— had a turn for such arrangements. There was a sort of terrace walk that ran round the house, and led to the bench beneath the trees. They were shady enough, and flourishing, notwithstanding London smoke. Light mists and drifts from the square passed across the garden. Sometimes bright skies lit up overhead, with a different quiver, indeed, to that thrill of azure life Angel was used to, but they shone as English skies should shine, veiled only by rain-giving clouds and gentle practical mists.

'You must make yourself at home, child,' said Lady W. kindly, as she took her into the room. 'Call for what you want—Mrs. Betty will attend upon you. You can receive your sitters in this outer room. Your good fairy, you see, has planned it all. Do you think you shall be happy here?' she said, looking at her steadily.

'Yes, indeed!' said Angelica, taking her hand, and kissing it gratefully.

'I think you *are* a good creature,' said Lady W., with a sort of suppressed sigh. 'I know not why I should think so. I have been disappointed over and over again.' So she went away, leaving her poor little *protégée* somewhat perplexed as to what mysterious fidelity was expected of her. I don't believe to tell the truth, that Lady W.

knew very well herself; but, as other people before her, she wished everybody to be and to do what she desired for them, and when they, naturally enough, went their own way, she considered herself deceived, and disappointed, and ill-treated by fate. She was not happy with all her possessions. Perhaps for great and small ladies too there is no lesson more difficult to learn than that of being contented and happy with the happiness and interests that happen to fall to each lot. We are willing to accept this event which does not belong to our history, that friend who does not need our regard, the interest or occupation which is the share of somebody else; but our own talents, it must be confessed, we often gladly put away in their napkins. Lady W. was a mysterious woman. She was good-natured, self-absorbed, wanting she knew not what. She took to people with great fervour for a time, then perhaps her expectations grew unreasonable, and her best and kindest nature being wounded, her selfish and colder feelings came to add to the confusion. It is certainly trying to live with this race of self-made demi-gods and goddesses.

Angelica found, however, that Lady W. meant to leave her very free to lead her own life. Her breakfast was brought to her in her room. Until dinner, which was at three, she had her time absolutely to herself, and the sacrificial rites to Vanity were only performed of an evening.

It is certain that a studio has a charm of its own which it is scarcely possible to account for, no matter how shabby, how bare it may be; there is the easel, the pure light shining upon it; there is the painter reproducing your dream or his.

Angelica's little oval studio was a fit setting to her inspirations. Nymphs seemed to her waiting on the terraces, heroes were crossing the paved hall or mounting the arched staircase outside that led to Lady W.'s receiving rooms; and besides these visionary interests, Angelica was not insensible to the pleasures of actual manipulation, to the friendly mesmerism of her brush travelling across the canvass, her colours lying on the palette, to the actual charm of her work, its tools, and practice.

Perhaps authors may have the same feeling when they sit down to a convenient table and find the faithful pen that has so patiently attended their flights and falls lying ready for use.

CHAPTER X.

PENELLO VOLANTE.

Miss Angel tried the first morning to turn her mind to her 'Arcadia,' and began to sketch it upon the canvass, but it was in vain; she could not apply, and no wonder, for all London seemed to come between her and her tranquillity. To her great relief and satisfaction, the door opened very soon, and Lady W. walked into the painting-room: she was in full visiting dress, and was pulling on her long gloves as she entered. 'Now, my sweet Kauffmann; leave your work,' she cried. 'Come, child, come; I have ordered the coach. I am dying to take you to call at Mr. Reynolds'.' 'Sweet Kauffmann,' without an instant's hesitation, laid down her palette and tripped into the next room to get ready. She found that Mrs. Betty was waiting there by her mistress's orders with a pretty and mysterious garment that Angelica was to wear on this great occasion. The waiting-woman tried it on; the

young girl looked at herself in the dim mirror, pushing back her lace. The glass reflected the pretty figure, the black silk shoes, the sprightly hands.

Lady W. was pleased with Angelica's artless pleasure in her new French hood. But she hurried her impatiently. 'He goes out early. Come! do not let us delay. Now it is *my* turn to take you to see pictures,' said Lady W. They had not far to go. The great coach turned the corner, crossed Piccadilly, turned up by Leicester Fields, of which one side was open in those days, and stopped at the door of a comfortable-looking house.

'Mr. Reynolds was not at home; Miss Reynolds was engaged,' the servant said.

Lady W., much disappointed, cast a glance at Angelica. 'Might we not go in?' said Angelica; and Lady W. immediately swept into the hall, desiring the servant to lead them to the studio. The dining-room door was open on one side of the hall, the staircase led to a long broad gallery, carpeted and hung with pictures, and opening into the studio. There were sofas and comfortable fires burning; the gallery was evidently used as a sort of sitting-room. There was a spinnet in a recess, and a child's doll sitting bolt upright upon the keys. With shy, curious eyes Angelica looked about, noting everything with suppressed interest. What dignified personages are these hanging to the walls? A picture was leaning against the back of a chair just outside the studio door, and it attracted Angelica.

It was the portrait of a young man, in a crimson military coat, with gold embroidery, powdered hair, and a very gentle and charming face.

'That is Sally Lennox, and that is her cousin,' said Lady W., pointing with her fan to a figure in a picture, in which Juno and the Graces had taken mortal shape, surely the most graceful and beautiful of that day. Libations were flowing, and tranquil altars to beauty were raised in shady groves by the courteous painter. As a contrast to the dream, a reality was hanging opposite. That of a man with a squint, and saturnine-looking face, and a long lean figure.

'What an ugly fellow!' cried Angelica, gaily, standing on tiptoe to look; 'he is much too ugly to be so well painted. I wonder he does not frighten those beautiful ladies away.'

'That, madam, is Mr. Wilkes, the celebrated patriot,' said an attendant, who had followed them. (The man was an Italian half-secretary, half-assistant, to Mr. Reynolds.) 'This is the well-known Colonel Barré,' he continued, and he pointed out another long, lean form, in a military coat.

On the opposite side of the gallery smiled two charming persons who will hold their graceful place in life, while Sir Joshua's *cera* and *lacca* and *olio* (as he notes them in his Diary) still exist. When these particles are dispersed into space the names of the beautiful actresses will

still remain associated with his art; Clarinda, as she writes herself on his list of sitters, is charming Mrs. Clive; and Mrs. Abington is also here, smiling, and gracious, and forgetting the irritation caused by Garrick's wrongs towards her.

The attendant told Angelica that the portrait of the young officer in the crimson coat was that of young Mr. André. 'He is just gone into the army,' said the man, 'and the picture is intended for him to give to his mother. Mr. Reynolds told me it was the likeness of the uniform that the young gentleman was specially anxious about, more than that of his face.'

Most of the finished pictures were hung in the gallery. In the studio were only those upon which the painter was engaged. It was a good-sized room, with a window high up in the wall, and a high raised chair for sitters.

Angelica started rapidly forward. 'This light is excellent,' she exclaimed; 'I never saw it so arranged before.' She also looked with reverence at the palettes with their wooden handles, at the great pencils with their long stocks, and then, with some sudden impulse, she sprang up into the sitter's chair.

She was still perched there when the master of the house himself walked in, and after one surprised glance, made his obeisance to Lady W. This lady had thrown herself into a graceful attitude, and stood leaning against the side of the great chair. She bent her head, graciously

composed, while Angelica, in some confusion, sprang down from her high perch.

Mr. Reynolds came forward, dressed in his velvet coat and with a bag wig; he was of middle size, and looked young for his age, he was a little deaf; but in those days in private he needed no trumpet; his clear eyes shone with placid benevolence under their falling lids. He had scarred lips, mobile and sensitive. His voice was singularly pleasant as he spoke.

'I have brought you—guess who this is that I have brought you,' Lady W. said, continuing to look so charming herself that the painter could only make another low bow and say, 'You have brought me a vision of Paradise, madam. My poor place seems illumined by such gracious apparitions. I am sorry,' he continued, 'to have been out when you arrived. I had been sent for to a friend in difficulties, who adds to mine by taking up time that might have been better spent. Was not my sister here to attend upon you?'

'Mrs. Reynolds was not dressed,' said Marchi, the outspoken attendant: 'she begged me to make her excuses. She was in no fit state to appear.'

Mr. Reynolds looked vexed, and immediately began to point out the pictures. Angelica looked, listened, and thrilled with admiration and reverence. Once turning round, the painter met the expressive flash of her eager eyes. How different was that language from the languid

fine-lady criticism to which he was accustomed. Something told him that this was no ordinary visitor, that one instant's glance between the two said more than half-a-dozen commonplaces interchanged. He stopped short as he was walking by Lady W. 'You have not introduced me to your friend,' he said. 'Can this be indeed Miss Kauffmann?' He looked at Angelica curiously and kindly.

'Yes, this *is* Miss Kauffmann,' said Lady W. with a laugh. 'You have found her out at last. Did I say one word too much?' she asked, smiling. He did not answer directly, but went on talking to Lady W. for a minute, and then turned to Angelica.

'Will you honour me by permitting a visit to your studio to-morrow morning?' said the great painter to the quivering, smiling, charming little painter in her pretty quaint dress. The satin trimmings glistened in the sloping light of the high window, the light just caught the turn of her white throat and the shining pearls Mrs. Betty had looped in her hair. The man's kind glances seemed also to shine, Angelica thought, and she blushed up with innocent pleasure. Mr. Reynolds accompanied them ceremoniously to the door of the house. As they descended the pretty old turning staircase Angel was saw a figure wrapped in a sort of cloak appearing in a doorway—it was that of a little middle-aged lady, who cautiously advanced towards them, then, seeing that Mr. Reynolds was there, vanished again with extraordinary celerity.

To-morrow! Do not fail us, false man,' said Lady W., holding up her finger. Then she asked casually whether Lord Henry Belmore had shown Mr. Reynolds his last attempt. 'Shocking daubs, are they not?' said Lady W. with a sort of forced laugh; but the experienced painter answered gravely that there was merit in them not to be passed over.

'There! Is he not charming?' cried Lady W., as they drove off in the great coach. 'I told you so . . . It is decreed in the book of fate. . . .' And all the way home Lady W. was her brightest and most charming self. All that afternoon and evening she loaded her *protégée* with kindness and pretty speeches. Lady Di, who was a good woman at heart, but not more perfect than her neighbours, began to feel even more provoked and indignant than usual. Angelica, who had tried in vain to conciliate her at first, now accepted open warfare, and at every new compliment looked round in childish glee to see how Diana frowned. Then came Lord Henry, joining in with his cousin Lady W., and echoing her words. He called himself a passionate admirer of art; and it was from him that Lady W. had learnt to take an interest in pictures, that is to say, in the pastels and the copies, and the copies of copies, that Lord Henry affected.

Next morning, true to his appointment, Mr. Reynolds walked across Berkeley Square to Lord W.'s house. He found her ladyship and Lady Di standing looking out from the gate of the Park.

'Miss Kauffmann is at home in her painting room. Come this way,' said Lady W. . . 'Let us take her by surprise: you can enter by the glass door.'

The surprise was very short, for Angelica had been listening to every footstep.

Once she thought Mr. Reynolds had really come, for someone knocked at the door, but it was only Lord Henry Belmore, who, rather to her annoyance, asked leave to wait in her studio for Lady W. She let him sit down where he would, and went on with her painting. Then came more steps on the terrace and voices, and Angelica looked up, blushed and sprang to open the window.

This time she saw the person she was waiting for so impatiently.

'Here is a friend,' said Lady W., as they all came in, then her voice changed: 'Henry, you here! we were waiting for you outside.'

'Surely you told me to come to the studio,' said Lord Henry! Then he stepped up to her and, in a low voice, said something, and the two walked off into the garden.

'How long had he been here?' Lady Di asked.

'A long time,' said Angelica: 'ten minutes—more, I painted the heel of my Cupid's little foot again while he was here.'

'And you evidently suffered from his vicinity,' said Mr. Reynolds, smiling; 'for your picture is charming; but you will have to repaint your Cupid's foot. If I may

venture to advise, I should not recommend you to ever paint without a model,' continued Mr. Reynolds: 'Mr. Boucher and others of the French school maintain that it is better to trust to one's own impressions; but there I cannot agree.'

Angelica grew interested; but, for the sake of argument, she attempted to contradict Mr. Reynolds, declaring that the little foot was not out of drawing; but though she contradicted, her own looks contradicted her own words, and she glanced up with deprecating blue eyes, knowing that people always forgave her when she looked them in the face.

'I can only speak from my own experience,' said Mr. Reynolds smiling. 'I may be wrong.'

Lady Diana saw it all. She said to herself that Angelica was a vulgar flirt and Mr. Reynolds a vain dupe; and then, this odd woman, reproaching herself for keeping secret feelings that she dared not express, said suddenly: 'Because Miss Kauffmann has well-shaped eyes, it does not follow that you should evade what you know to be true, Mr. Reynolds: her pictures are out of drawing; it is all very pretty and sentimental, but quite false to nature.'

Mr. Reynolds disliked anything approaching to a scene. 'My admiration for Miss Kauffmann's work is too sincere for me to hesitate to declare what seems to me to be its excellence, or in what it might still

further be improved,' he said. 'Correctness of eye is only to be acquired by long habit; when anything is properly made our own it becomes part of ourselves and operates unperceived. We may thus exercise a kind of instinctive rectitude of mind and of conduct, which will supersede all rules.'

He spoke quietly, continuing on purpose to give Angelica time to recover from Lady Di's unprovoked attack; he was as much annoyed with that lady as it was possible to a man of his gentle nature.

The tears of vexation shining in Angel's eyes did not mend matters or soften him towards her adversary. With some sudden brightness and effort, Angelica brushed them away unaffectedly, and said: 'Thank you, Mr. Reynolds; you have given me heart again, and in truth Lady Diana is not the first person who has warned me of my defects. I know it is from kindness,' said the girl, turning suddenly to Lady Di.

'It is from no kindness,' said Lady Di, turning pale; 'and people should forbear to speak, unless they are in sympathy with those they criticise—not even though the picture *is* out of drawing,' said she, and walked out of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

FIORI.

Before Mr. Reynolds left, he fixed a day for their next meeting, and asked leave to paint Miss Angel's portrait. She delightedly agreed. If Angelica felt somewhat forlorn at times, she always brightened up after a talk with Mr. Reynolds. He spoke with all Antonio's directness and sympathy, and with authority as well. They had many long talks together; she enjoyed her sittings very much, and spoke to him openly of all her old life and new hopes, in which he took unfailing interest. It was at this time that Angelica wrote long happy letters to her father in her uncle Michael's farm. When was he coming—was Antonio with him—was he not rejoiced at his child's good fortune?—Happy as she was, she missed him sadly at times, and longed for his paternal sympathy and advice and help. She had visited many painters, she told him, Mr. Cipriani among the rest: but chief of all was Mr. Reynolds, the first painter in the town. He has

his own peculiar manner, writes Angelica. His portraits are almost historical; he has a flying brush (*un penello volante*), and a great knowledge of *chiaroscuro*. Then she told her father of all the kind things people said. Mr. Reynolds himself had asked her to paint his portrait; those which she had already executed had given satisfaction. Lady W. had promised her letters of introduction to the Duchess of Argyll. The Princess of Brunswick was to sit to her. She had heard that the Queen herself had asked with interest concerning her. Mr. Reynolds was the kindest, the most untiring friend. 'I might indeed think too much of his kindness,' wrote Angelica, 'but that I have vowed to think only of my art, and have closed my heart to all other passions.' There is a little paper still in existence which the girl traced one night in a thoughtful mood.

'Not easily shall I bind myself: Rome is ever in my thoughts. The Holy Spirit will direct me.'

Then she wrote again to the old father still lingering in the distant farm-house with the too familiar goatherd, detailing more and more success. The Princess of Brunswick had ordered a portrait of Angelica herself, and this picture had procured for her the honour of a visit from the Princess of Wales, the mother of the King; such an honour had never before been done to any painter, writes Angelica. Now she is beginning to put by money, now she may think of a home for her dear to come to, now she may begin to see her way established. 'Her letters, at

this time,' says Rossi, 'are those of a person at the summit of tranquillity and joy.' A little later on she tells John Joseph of a proposition of marriage and of her refusal, and it was soon after this that Mr. Fuseli left London and went abroad. But notwithstanding these letters, old John Joseph still delayed, he made one excuse and another. Antonio was in despair. He could not afford to wait any longer for the obstinate old man, who seemed deaf to his daughter's entreaties.

Notwithstanding all their kindness, Angelica felt very lonely at times. She had been longing for some word of protective admonition; she had an instinctive desire for protection, it was as necessary to her as liberty. Mr. Reynolds often gave her more sense of ease by his few kind words than did all the compliments and adulations to which she was now so used. Sometimes unduly excited about her work, sometimes utterly depressed and hopeless, the bracing sense of the truth as it struck another person's mind came to her with an unspeakable relief. It was not the partial truth of adverse criticism, which is always hard to bear, but the considerate judgment of one high in authority, of a person qualified to speak. And for Reynolds, was it not a new experience of happiness to have such a sweet model bringing new life, light, and colour, into his hard-working existence? 'Miss Angel; Fiori' is written in that book of fate, his diary for the year. But he need not have written the words. his mind was full of her

and her concerns. The flowers were for her birthday, when Lady W. had graciously promised to bring her to sup in Leicester Fields. They were all to assemble in Charles Street first, and to go to see Mr. Garrick in Hamlet 'Make yourself beautiful, my Angel, and do not be late; Mr. Reynolds is expected,' said Lady W.

Angel was glad that Mr. Reynolds was expected, and she went to dress with a light heart, feeling that friends were true, life was worth living, and even dress worth dressing. Miss Angel spared no pains in her attire that evening, and showed her wit in a sacque and petticoat of white silk, resembling network—not unlike that one worn by Mrs. Nollekens at her wedding. It was shot with grey and embroidered with rose-buds. The deep and pointed stomacher was pinked and gimped. The sleeves of this dress closely fitted the arm to a little below the elbow, from which hung three point-lace ruffles. Her neckerchief was of point, and confined by a bunch of rose-buds, and the three rows of pearls were tied with a narrow white satin ribbon behind. They were Roman pearls, but not the less becoming to her slender throat.

Her hair was piled over a cushion (these ornaments were rising in favour steadily year by year). She wore a small cap of point-lace to correspond with her ruffles. Her shoes were of the same material as her dress, with Bristol spangles and heels three inches high. She came in smiling and laughing, in her wildest spirits, prepared to enjoy, and to

admire, and to be admired, if the truth must be confessed.

As she entered the room, she saw a figure standing against the light. 'Is it you, Mr. Reynolds?' she said, for she was still thinking of him. 'Have you been waiting long?'

Mr. Reynolds was fond of speaking Italian, and often used that language; but this deep, angry voice sounded very unlike his gentle tones.

'I have been waiting for many weeks, and you are not yet ready for me, I see,' said the voice. Surely that was not Mr. Reynolds; some one stepped out of the shadow, and Angelica uttered a little exclamation, for it was Antonio whose dark eyes were flashing at her; angry, happy, suspicious, eyes melting at the sight of her again, frowning at her greeting. For one minute she was enchanted to see her old companion; she clapped her hands, and darted up to him with a glad exclamation: 'Antonio! Antonio! who thought of seeing you! My father, where is he?'

Zucchi was silent, looking at her admiringly. He had never dreamt of her in such beauty and brilliance. Was it indeed Angelica? 'I have broken my promise, Angelica! I have come without your father,' he said at last. 'But it was in vain I urged him. I should have lost my year's work had I waited longer. I left him ten days ago at Morbegno; he is well, and well cared for.

He will come, he says, when you are in your own house.'

'So much for your promises,' said Angel, bitterly disappointed and unjust to poor Antonio. 'You have left him, poor dear! who is one to trust if one cannot trust you? you, who are always warning one against others; you, who——'

The door opened as she was speaking, still eager and excited, and a servant announced Mr. Reynolds, and almost immediately after Lord Henry Belmore and Mr Fuseli. Lady W. affected an artistic society. She had met the young painter with the lion head not long before, and taken to him, perhaps among other reasons, because she had been somewhat piqued by his indifference.

Mr. Reynolds was in full dress. He wore his red velvet court suit and his sword. He came up, carrying the flowers he had ordered in the morning, and presented them to the young ladies with a little compliment full of *bonhomie* and grace. The expression of his face was very kind as he bent before the young deity at whose shrine they all seemed to lay down their arms. As Mr. Reynolds stepped forward, Angelica's passing anger was distracted. She had forgotten it all; but Antonio's heart sank with gloomy apprehension. Her anger had pained him less than her pleasure now did. Was ever any one so absurd, so proud, so sensitive as this shabby little painter?

Not Mr. Reynolds in all his glory, not Angelica radiant and supreme, could guess the depths of that curious nature. Angelica might have understood him if she had had time or wish to do so; but she was pre-occupied, impatient; her beautiful silk dress rustled at every step; her many lovers and friends were all arriving, saluting, talking, and calling her away. The door kept opening, and admitting first one person and then another. Lady W. made her state entry, followed by my lord in his blue ribbon. Zucchi saw some of the people present glance at him with surprise; and when the lady of the house entered, her look of enquiry and amazement might have disconcerted a far more experienced man of the world than he.

'This is my old friend Antonio Zucchi,' said Angelica, coming forward with her quick familiar voice; 'he came to bring me news of my father, dearest lady.' Then she turned to him more constrainedly, for Lady W.'s somewhat haughty stare was still upon Antonio. 'You must come to-morrow morning when I am alone, Antonio, and then we will talk over our business;' and she held out her hand.

'Our business!' said Antonio, coldly; 'I have no business. I came as a friend to see you; it is time I should retire and leave you to your acquaintance,'—and he bowed to Lady W.; not without dignity, and then to Angel.

'Will not Miss Angelica's friend honour me with his company to-night?' said Mr. Reynolds, always courteous and considerate of others, and he came forward as he spoke. Antonio stiffly declined, made him a haughty bow, and was gone. Once outside he could control himself no longer. As he ran downstairs, he impatiently struck his hand upon his head, muttering something like 'False! false!' to himself. He did not even see Lady Diana, who passed him on her way to join the company and heard his words. It was some discarded adorer, she thought. Poor man, she was sorry for him, and as she opened the door she was shocked and revolted by Angelica's gay burst of laughter. Angelica's first feeling had certainly been that of present relief. Everybody looked more at ease when Antonio left the room, and the voices rose. But although Antonio was gone, he still seemed present to Angelica in some mysterious way. Diana did not know that these good spirits were partly caused by his coming. A little later on and Angelica became more *distraite*, and it was the Kauffmann, and not Mr. Reynolds, who begged for a repetition of M. Fuseli's remark.—What were they all talking about? The new erection in the King's gardens at Kew; —the Chinese tower, designed by Chambers, and costing ever so many thousands.

'I cannot say I admire it,' said Mr. Reynolds. 'We are dwellers in London, and not at Pekin.'

'But we drink Bohea out of China cups; we wear

brocades and crapes from China,' said Lady W. and she held up one of the long loose sleeves.

'And we, madam, are certain to be charmed by anything you choose to wear or to do,' said Mr. Reynolds, bowing again; 'but you did not erect the Chinese tower'

CHAPTER XII.

'HAMLET.'

Mr. Garrick was acting Hamlet that night in powder and court dress, facing the infinite in a periwig and treading the great globe of life in paste shoebuckles. There was something magnetic in the night; misty as it was, with vapours enclosing the theatre and creeping in from outer doorways and veiling the brilliant charms of the ladies present; the rouge on their cheeks; the pretty crimsoned lips. Then the great play itself seemed to spread and spread and drive out all other impressions. It was not only on the stage that it was being acted.

The play seemed to grow and grow, to become the life of those human beings all assembled there; they were come together to see a play, to laugh at one another and make signs and to admire and criticise, but they remained to listen to the secrets of their lives unfolded.

Garrick's faithful adorer, Miss Hannah More, sat palpitating in a box by Mrs. Garrick's side.

Zucchi was in the pit: he knew none of the people. He had heard someone speak of the performance at Lady W.'s, and it had suddenly occurred to him to come too. There he waited in his place, looking for one face which had not yet appeared.

In a stage-box sat the shabby and noble figure of a man, with a seamed and benevolent countenance, and by his side an intelligent little ferretty person, peeping forward to get a better view of the audience

'They're come, sir,' he said, 'the whole party; they have secured two excellent boxes. There is Mr. Reynolds and Fuseli, and there is the fair observed of all observers. Mr. Reynolds has not invited me to sup with him to-night. I hear he is giving a festivity; you, of course, are privileged.'

'There is no privilege, Sir, in being admitted to a house where friendship has established a right of way,' said the big shabby man. 'But to-night I shall refrain; Mr. Reynolds is not unbiassed by the transient influences of those inferior to him in intellect. Miss Frances is far more dependable, *she* would make my tea undisturbed by any circumstances.'

Mr. Boswell was craning to get a good view of the 'transient influences' now surrounding Mr. Reynolds. Lovely, smiling, splendid Lady W. had never looked more stately and beautiful than she did that night. Her charms seemed diffused somehow; she and Angelica were opposite

to each other like two mirrors reflecting one another. A summer, a spring blooming in brightness, their fans waved, the flowers seemed to fill the box. Even Lady Diana looked her best.

Mr. Boswell then discovered that Miss Angel was peeping at Dr. Johnson, also that Dr. Burney and his daughters were in another part of the theatre. 'Mrs. Thrale should not have been absent on such a night as this,' he remarked.

The play began, and Mr. Boswell was silent.

In great acting there is some subtle measure impossible to describe, time passing in a certain harmony, and that night, when Hamlet stood upon the stage, a mysterious intelligence not to be explained seemed certainly, and at once, to flash between him and his audience. The plain, commonplace-looking man became instantly, and without effort, the master of all these splendid people who were watching him. It was as if he were the pulse that flowed through all their veins. This hour was his own, as this mood was his, to which he gave the note, the time, the life almost.

How nobly he stands listening, horror stricken, but grand in his very horror, while the poor Ghost moans its awful plaint! Hamlet's beautiful voice seemed to strike home to every heart when he spoke in clear tranquil tones. Then rise passion and remorse, and woes thicken

as the play goes on, and the notes come full and dull with passion, and the words seem to break bounds and jar and clang . . .

Is the noble prince maddened as he turns hearts to scorn, rending and railing at all those he has loved and trusted hitherto?

Through this storm of shaken life comes white Ophelia, wandering with her pale and tender face.

Mrs. Addington was not acting that night, but a young actress whose utter simplicity and sweetness touched them all.

'I did love you once,' said Hamlet.

'Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so,' says Ophelia.

'Get thee to a nunnery,' he cries remorselessly, carried far beyond the mood of love, but tender still, even in this moment, when a swerving finite nature is suddenly brought to face the infinite truth, as it lies between them, awful, inevitable.

The scene was so inexpressibly sad and despairing, it raised all the audience out of their petty chatter and racket of snuff-boxes. Miss Hannah burst into tears.

It was a relief to everyone when once more the courtiers and the players distract the jarred soul and bring it back into common words and daily life for a time.

'Mr. Garrick outdoes himself to-night,' said Mr. Boswell.

'Sir,' said his tutor, 'you mean that Garrick outdoes your preconceived opinion of his powers. He has played his part with memory. He is a good repeater of other men's words.'

But when Mr. Reynolds came into the box presently, and made some slight objection to a detail in Hamlet's performance, the old man rose up in wrath.

Mr. Reynolds did not stay to argue the matter; he has left a record of some such dialogue with his old friend. He was in haste to return to his companions.

It was not only Miss Hannah More whose then youthful tears flowed that evening. For little Angelica the doom of the inevitable seemed to strike almost for the first time. The knell sounded in her ears, poor Ophelia's story seemed so unutterably sad. 'How could he leave her? she said; 'oh, how could he leave her?' and she turned to Mr. Reynolds, and then laughed and tried to wipe away her tears. 'I am ashamed,' she sobbed all confused. 'Might I be permitted to retire to the back of the box?' She moved her chair as she spoke.

Both Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Fuseli came forward together and each on either side held out a hand to assist her. Angelica half laughed again, and looked from one to the other gaily through her passing tears; then she put out her two little hands, and raised herself with the help of both the gentlemen.

Some one in the pit, who had been looking on, turned very pale and made a furious indignant movement.

'How angry that man looks,' said a casual spectator to his companion: 'Is he not a countryman of yours, Mr. Cipriani?'

'My countrymen are apt to look angry when they are vexed,' said Mr. Cipriani. He was a dark-eyed man, with a long nose and a brown face full of refinement and intelligence. '*Your* countrymen take life more calmly, Mr. Nollekens,' he added laughingly.

'That man is frowning at Mrs. Kauffmann up among her fine birds. My heart, how she seems to be carrying on with Mr. Reynolds!' said Mr. Nollekens.

'She is of a gay and innocent temper, and thinks not of evil tongues,' said Mr. Cipriani kindly: 'she has real talent, she brought me some drawings yesterday.'

CHAPTER XIII.

TAKE OF THIS GRAIN WHICH IN MY GARDEN GROWS.

All the house in Leicester Fields was lighted up ready to receive the company; and for once Mr. Reynolds had given special orders that everything was to be prepared for his guests' comfort. I think it was on this occasion that the new dinner-service was ordered in, and the cut glass, which is mentioned in history. Mr. Reynolds himself must have chosen it, for Miss Reynolds was of too anxious and timid a disposition to order the occasional chaos of the house on her own responsibility.

Mr. Reynolds stood by the fire behind Angelica's chair while the supper was going on. Mr. and Mrs. Garrick were to have come, but Garrick was tired after his performance, and sent an excuse. He had spoken an epilogue, which had taken them all by surprise. Not one of them had recognised him in the clownish countryman who came on with a spade under his arm. Mrs. Garrick herself had been wondering who it could be, when her little

dog suddenly began to wag his tail as he lay on her lap concealed, and then she knew that, though they had been deceived, Flash had discovered his master. It was Mr. Fuseli who recounted the little story, with which Lady Di was enchanted. Lord Henry seemed to think it would be a subject for Mr. Reynolds' pencil.

'Does your lordship mean the little dog's tail?' said Angel, laughing.

Lady W. frowned; she did not like Lord Henry's suggestion to be lightly treated.

Angelica was in a curiously excited condition that night. She was unlike her usual placid cheerful self, so easily, gaily pleased with the sort of life as it reached her; Hamlet had stirred the very depths of her heart. Then came the reaction of outer things, the compliments, the admiration, the scent of the flowers seemed to rise into her brain, the lights dazzled, the talk carried her away. Mr. Fuseli made no secret of his devotion. If Mr. Reynolds was more reserved in his manifestation of interest, it was not that he felt less. She knew that he was with her all along. He threw in a word from time to time, attended quietly to her wants, never left her side, seemed young, interested, responsive as any of them that night.

Lord Henry, who was also somewhat excited, filled up Lady W.'s glass and called for a toast. 'Shall we drink to beauty?' he cried. 'To the living Muses among us!'

'Let us drink to our rivals,' said Mr. Reynolds, smiling, and bowing to Angelica.

Mr. Fuseli cried out that he would not drink such a toast. 'I shall drink mine in silence,' he said, and looked at Miss Kauffmann.

'Drink what toasts you will,' cried Angelica, starting up from the table with a gay laugh. 'I shall go and enjoy a different feast.' She walked across the room and along the passage, and up the short flight of steps that led to the studio, of which the great doors were open. Her heart was still beating; she was still treading upon air. She was standing looking at a lovely picture on Mr. Reynolds' easel, when she heard a step on the polished floor, and looking round she saw that her host had also left the supper table, and come in search of her. He had come, yielding to the impulse of the moment, and, for once in his tranquil life, carried away by the influence of something that seemed stronger than himself, than that habit of self-control by which he justly set such store.

Angelica had in that instant become a painter again, as some people do who have two lives to lead. She was looking at the picture, and for a moment she had forgotten the painter, and was wondering at his work, at the breadth and grace of that lovely combination of colour, of feeling, of flowing ease.

It was no depth of divine despair that overmastered

her now as when she had gazed at the great triumphant Titian in the chapel at Venice, it was with some sort of hope that she could look, and admire, and try to realise the gracious mystery of this new master's art.

This picture happened to be the full-length portrait of the beautiful Lady Elizabeth Keppel, represented as a bridesmaid sacrificing to Hymen: the sad fate of this lady excited much feeling at the time; she married Lord Tavistock, who was killed by a fall from his horse not long after, and the poor young wife died of a broken heart, and was mourned in all the odes and elegies of the day. Is there any sign of this sad coming shadow in the lovely radiant picture before which Angelica was standing in her old attitude, bird-like, pensive? It is the old attitude; but I am not sure that Antonio was not right, and that the shabby grace of the darned green gown was not more becoming than all the delicate silk and present rosebud embroideries. Dress was certainly one of her special gifts, and what she wore becam a part of herself. It is just as characteristic of some other women to be beautiful, notwithstanding their clothes.

'I am trying to find out what charms you have used, Mr. Reynolds, in this lovely, wonderful picture. I think you breathe upon the canvas and *will* the life into your creations: I cannot account for the result you attain to in any other way.'

He did not answer immediately, then he smiled. 'The only incantations I have used here are a little colour and oil mixed with magylp,' he said, 'and a coat of varnish, dear lady. Perhaps while you are in the room,' he repeated, 'my poor works may seem to breathe for a few minutes; but that is your doing, not mine. You must know,' he added, with some change of voice, 'what difference *your* coming makes to this house and to its master, who also comes to life in your presence I think. Can you not understand me?' he said. 'Can you not guess what? if I dared . . . if I were so presumptuous as to form a hope, that hope would be . . . ?'

Angelica was beginning to understand this earnest gaze—this grave emphatic manner. Lady W. had prophesied and prophesied, and Mr. Reynolds had given hints before now, and her own heart had sometimes spoken; his beautiful pictures had spoken a hundred times, and suddenly Miss Angel looked round in not unrelenting consternation and excitement. With a sort of flashing thought she pictured all future possibilities to herself. Was this quiet, tranquil gentleman her future husband? Was this great lighted house her home?

Then she thought of her father. She seemed to see him installed in this sumptuous and comfortable haven. She had wandered off into this day-dream, and almost forgotten Mr. Reynolds himself, who was standing patiently watching the bright expression of that smiling

face. Alas! as she smiled, his heart failed. He could read faces; that was his trade. Good will he read upon those smiling lips, enthusiasm in those blue eyes; but not one melting gleam of personal tenderness and feeling, not one relenting emotion of heart-felt response, not one answer to his own strange, unexpected throb of heart.

'I am presumptuous,' he said, 'and yet I must persist in my presumption. Dear lady, tell me, do you understand me? Can similarity of taste and feeling, and my deep and heartfelt homage, which will never be less sincere than now, whatever your answer may be, stand you in the place of those many parts in which I know I am deficient?' Angelica blushed up crimson, but she was quite collected. Mr. Reynolds saw it, he felt his own agitation growing almost beyond his control. He turned away to recover, and to regain his calm. As he turned away, Angelica looked after him. All his kindness, all the advantages he offered her, were present to her mind. Did she love him? Antonio would say she had sold herself for money. No; no. If she accepted Mr. Reynolds, it would not be for any sordid reason. He must not think such reasons influenced her. She would not deceive him, it was out of very truth and sincerity that she hesitated, and flaunted her fan.

'But, Mr. Reynolds, you have your art? Is she not your mistress?' said Angelica, coquettishly.

'You know my infirmity. I did not catch your

meaning,' said Mr. Reynolds, immediately coming back, and when Angelica repeated her sentence, which certainly was scarcely worth the trouble of repeating, he sighed, in answer,—

'Art may be a mistress that we painters must be content to worship with a hopeless passion. She cannot be a wife, an equal, a living friend and helper, answering to the need of our human hearts.'

His tone was so simple, that it touched Angel very much.

'But why did you then think of *me*, Mr. Reynolds?' said she, with a slight quiver, and a sort of laugh. 'I am sure you have repented already; and to let you into a secret, you are right in so doing.'

If Angelica answered flippantly, it was not because she did not feel his words, but because some instinctive honesty prevented her from letting him imagine that she had any deeper emotion than that which she really experienced.

Compared to *his*, her own feeling seemed to her so slight, so worthless, that she was ashamed. She stood looking at him gratefully, with one of her azure looks. 'If I marry, as I suppose I must,' she said, 'I fear my future husband will have to be content with a second place. With a third,' she went on, looking down, and clasping the little velvet at her wrist;—'for I have my father's happiness to think of as well as my own. Believe

me,' she continued, smiling gaily, 'it will be vastly more sensible to leave things as they are. 'If I were to marry you, it would not be *you* so much as the things you could give me. Those I can do without, my friend I cannot spare. No, Mr. Reynolds,' she said suddenly, 'no shall be my answer.'

Miss Angel had been honest; her conscience gave a secret throb of approbation, but I think, woman-like, she intended him not to be content with such an indefinite reply.

He did not quiver or show much change of manner when Angelica gave him her bright saucy denial, and yet to him it seemed far more ultimate than she had any idea of. Reynolds went on quietly talking, so quietly that Angelica asked herself in amazement whether she had dreamed that he had proposed; he showed her one or two pictures, explained what pigments he had used for them, and when Lady W. came in from the supper-room with expressive looks and eyes directed curiously upon the two, he waited till she joined them, asked her opinion of his picture, quietly included her in the conversation, and then walked away with her.

Angelica stood by the picture looking after them in a strange and overpowered state of mind. It was now her turn to be agitated. She watched Lady W.'s silk dress shining and Mr. Reynolds' sword swinging as he walked, then they joined some of the company, and a burst of

laughter reached Angel standing alone by the great easel. All the pictures seemed looking at her reproachfully. 'What have you done? why have you vexed our good master?' they said. 'How kind he was; how considerate; how manful were his words—what a true gentleman he is in all his ways—what have you done? why have you done it?'

Little Miss Reynolds came flitting through the rooms looking for a handkerchief she had dropped: she found Angel still in the studio, and exclaimed, in surprise—'Alone! Bless me, my dear, how is this?—what has happened? has Joshua made the offer? With all his faults, child, he will make a good and faithful husband.'

'Did he tell you?' said Angel, bewildered, and longing for sympathy.

'Tell me—not he, child. He is as mum as the church steeple to me; sisters play a small part in men's lives. So he has done it, hey? You need not fear telling me. I understand it all—don't cry, my dear—don't cry. I have no doubt you spoke very prettily; trust me—it will all come right; and I am sure I don't know where he could find a sweeter wife,' said the little old maid, looking at her with kind eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

PUT OUT THE LIGHT.

Lady W. liked to wind up her little passing interests with some triumphant catastrophe which flattered her sense of power, and rid her of any uncomfortable feeling of responsibility. Something had vexed her the night of Mr. Reynolds' entertainment. She was very cross going home, and scarcely spoke to Angel. Was my lady getting tired of her, as she had wearied of so many others?

It was Lady Diana who talked and who praised the supper, the house, the host.

Angel was absorbed in the thought of what had occurred. She could not make up her mind whether or not to repeat it all to her friend.

When she would have said good-night to her patroness at the foot of the stairs as usual, Lady W. responded very coldly. For the first time the gracious lady looked ungracious. She answered the girl's inquiring glance with a cold 'Good-night, Kauffmann.'

Angelica could scarcely believe that the tone was for her. 'Are you not well?' she said.

'I am quite well, only sorry to have to speak to you, Kauffmann,' Lady W. answered; 'but I must tell you that your manner to-night was vastly too free for the society into which I have introduced you. I cannot countenance free manners in my box at the play, and I have been much annoyed by the levity of to-night. My lord observed upon it, and has begged me to remonstrate.'

A faint sound from my lord was heard, but it died away, and he suddenly disappeared by some back stairs.

My lady was fluttering her fan in some agitation. Lady Diana, and the footmen, and the maids were all round about.

Angelica turned pale, stood silent, justly wounded, and then said, with simple dignity, 'I will speak to you to-morrow, madam, in private, not now,' and she walked away to her own room, trembling, with beating pulse, bewildered, offended.

A fire was burning, and candles had been lighted, by Mrs. Betty, unaware as yet of the favourite's disgrace, but the maid immediately began to suspect something amiss when Angelica burst into tears. As I have said before, it was not the first time such scenes had occurred.

Lady W. rustled up with her beautiful twinkling satin feet, feeling immensely virtuous and superior: she dis-

coursed to Lord W. for an hour on Angelica's enormities, suddenly remembering, as vexed people do, many others which had never occurred to her till that moment. The girl's manner to Henry Belmore was most flippant and unbecoming, her ways were unendurable. She had used her *best* to bring Mr. Reynolds to her feet, but his good sense evidently kept him back.

Poor Lord W. knew of old that it was hopeless to try and stem this torrent; he set his watch a few seconds wrong in his perplexity, gave precise directions to his valet about being called in the morning, and as to the preparation of a pot of glue he should require to complete a little nest of boxes he was engaged upon.

Poor Angel! coldness from those she loved chilled her and pained her as much as their love vivified and warmed; and she loved Lady W., whose kindness had been unending, and whose praises had been very sweet to her. Was it possible that people spoke truly when they said that people changed? Ah! no, she could not believe it, never, never. Angelica was not yet old enough to stretch her interests beyond the radius of her own longings, and of those who loved her; that is the gift of later years, and perhaps the one blessing that supplements their emptiness. No one had ever in her recollection been unkind to her before. She was half-amazed, half-in-

dignant; could it be true? Had she been free? Had she forgotten what was becoming to her station? What had she done?

She dismissed Mrs. Betty with the curious eyes, tore off her rosebud dress impatiently, and flung it on the floor in a heap; then she put on an old dressing-gown she used to wear in Italy. That, at least, was her own; little else. The very fire which warmed her resentment was given to her by the person who had insulted her; the person whom she loved, and whose unkindness cut all the more cruelly because she loved her. Lady W. had been unkind, and they seemed suddenly parted. Mr. Reynolds had been too kind, and they seemed parted too; it was all utterly bewildering. Had she shown herself ungrateful to him? Was she being punished now for the pain she had inflicted on another? Was this a warning not to be neglected by her? Was it too late to undo the past?

Angel was still sitting there, broken and overcome by the different emotions of the day, when someone knocked at the door, and, to her surprise, Lady Diana came in.

'I wanted to talk to you,' said she, in her abrupt voice, and putting down the light that she was carrying.

She came up to the fire, and stood leaning against the tall chimney, silent for a moment; a little round glass overhead reflected the two, in their flowing robes and

emotions. Lady Diana also had assumed a loose chintz morning robe, all her hair was falling about her pale face, which was brightened with some unusual look of sympathy and interest.

'I hardly know how you will like what I am going to say, but it is well meant, although you may not think so,' she began in her abrupt voice. 'I thought I should find you distressed; I could not help coming to speak on what has happened.'

'I am foolish, perhaps,' said Angel, beginning to cry again. 'I don't wish to trouble anyone. I don't ask——' she could not finish the sentence.

Lady Diana began walking up and down the room, then stopped suddenly.

'After what has occurred, the sooner you are able to establish yourself in a home of your own, the better chance there will be for the continuance of your friendship with Judith. But it is not at once that the remembrance of such scenes passes away.'

'I should be the most ungrateful of women if anything ever made me forget my grateful friendship for Lady W.,' cried Angelica, looking up with her overflowing eyes, and then, to her surprise, she saw that there were tears in Lady Diana's eyes—real tears.

'Are you sorry for me? How good of you. I was feeling so lonely as you came in; I was longing for mamma, for my father; longing for Antonio, for some one

to advise me,' cried quick little Angelica, meeting this unexpected sympathy, and then as quickly she drew back frightened again, suddenly remembering Lady Diana's long and many unkindnesses that she had forgotten for a moment.

'I don't wonder you mistrust me,' said Lady Diana, who seemed to read her heart, 'I have been cold and unkind, and you must forgive all that; and if I mean to try and be kind to you now, be generous enough not to repulse me,' said the elder woman. 'You must remember that I have loved these people all my life, and that I saw you come suddenly into my place, absorb my rights, my words, my looks, and my home happiness. Was it not natural that I should feel hurt and wounded? My happinesses are few enough. I love these children; and my cousin W. has been a brother to me all my life, and even Judith is dearer to me a thousand times than I am to her, but I am a cold-hearted woman, and I did not come to talk of myself,' she said, blushing up. 'I came to talk to you, and to say, Will you let me help you to choose a home, where you may be independent and free? and will you let me lend you enough money to pay your rent this year? You shall pay it back as you like and when you will;' and she held out a pocket-book. 'This is a hundred pounds. You can have as much more if you will. I scarcely deserve that you should take it from me.'

'But do you indeed think that I ought to leave?'

faltered Angelica, reluctant and shrinking from such a desperate measure, although a few moments ago it had been what she wished.

'Believe me, indeed, it will be best for all our sakes,' said Lady Diana, gravely. 'I know this house better than you do. I have made up my mind and paid my price. I am content to be discontented; surely you would never be satisfied with that?'

'Content with discontent? no, indeed,' said the young painter. 'Why should any one accept such a fate? Perhaps you are waiting for something?' she added, simply, looking at her visitor, who now for the first time seemed to her capable of interesting, and of being herself interested.

'I tell you this is my fate,' said Lady Diana, impatiently; 'and I expect nothing and I ask nothing. Count de Horn would have married me for my money at Venice. Judith was very angry when I refused him. She cannot understand, she who values money and position so much, how a woman, placed as I am, lonely and insignificant, can be better content with such a fate as mine than she is herself with her own fortunes. She cannot forgive a refusal. Good-night, you poor little thing,' said Diana, taking Angelica's hand. 'I shall like to come and sit to you in your new painting-room, and I will bring my friend Anne Conway to you, and while you

stay here remember that Judith has a right to be first in her own society.'

'Yes,' said Angel, 'I will try. I fear you have made me too happy; I have forgotten my own position.'

Lady Diana looked hard at Miss Angel as she spoke. 'You might remember if you chose that a very good and high position may be yours, one that many of us would not refuse,' she said.

Angel blushed up. How lovely she looked, all softened by tears and then brightened by emotion!

'It is too late,' she faltered. '*That* I have not accepted; but the hundred pounds I will take gladly from you, if you will never be unkind to me again.'

'Here, child; good-night!' said Lady Di, kissing her shyly, and running out of the room.

Angelica went to bed somewhat comforted; but all night long strange horrors and dreams haunted her comfortable alcove; dreams and terrors that not all the counterpanes and eider-downs could keep away. She saw Mr. Reynolds in trouble, and some one seemed hiding behind one of the pictures, and then came a scream, and she awoke. She herself had screamed but there was no one to hear her. She was thankful when morning light came, and Mrs. Betty with a cup of chocolate. Here was the morning; was everything as it had been before? Notwithstanding cockcrow and morning light, Lady W.'s coldness continued.

Angelica's portrait was not yet sent home. She had begged Mr. Reynolds to keep it for her until she moved into her own house. It had been taken out of the studio the night of the supper, and carried into the painting-room where Marchi used to work upon his master's pictures. The morning after the party, when Mr. Reynolds walked into his study as usual, the picture had been replaced. There it stood, facing him, with its half-conscious, half-unconscious witcheries. His heart sank very much when he walked up to it, and for an instant he felt almost inclined with his long-stocked brush to paint the whole canvas over, for when he came up it seemed to smile at him as Angelica herself had done the night before; but painting out a picture could make no change in his feelings towards her. If feelings could be so easily displaced the world would be far less furnished than it is at present. Painting pictures of other people would be more to the purpose, thought the workman with a sigh. Some little details were still to be finished upon this one; the fur on the cloak, the shadow on the throat; and while he added what was wanting, the man became a painter again.

He was able to think calmly, and to make deliberate resolutions. Henceforth he would never again be faithless to his life's true interest. This had been an extraordinary phase, utterly unexpected, a phase which was over for ever. What had he been about? He was a 'working man,' as old Johnson had called him one day in jest. He

was no professed lover or squire of dames. She had been right as regarded him, though perhaps wrong as to herself, thought the painter with some natural bias; and for one moment a thought of her as she had looked, standing there by the easel smiling in her shining silks, nearly overcame his resolve; a fancy of her there, among them all, cherished and tenderly appreciated, and faithfully loved. . . . The brush fell idly as he painted this picture with certain colours, more fleeting still perhaps than his olios and ceras. Fate had decided otherwise. He felt certain that she had no feeling for him. Without it, it would be folly for her to marry one so much older, so little suited. Something had gone out the night before when the house had been lighted so brilliantly. He was surprised to find now how easily this blow had fallen. He was very sad, very much pre-occupied; but he felt that on the whole circumstances had fallen out better than he had sometimes expected, less well perhaps than he had hoped.

For some little time past all his future had seemed suddenly illumined by new interests and by a new light. Now nothing of it was left—it was extinguished—that was all. No ray seemed left, absolutely none; and he saw things once more in the old bald daylight.

He was not shaken or distressed, but changed somehow. It seemed to him as if the Angelica he had loved had died the night before; and as if he had now to learn

to live again without her. And this old stock phrase is full of meaning to those souls new born into this hackneyed old life through pain and secret pangs.

It is not for any one to say how far Mr. Reynolds was right or wrong in his determination henceforth to rule his life, and not to be ruled by the chances of it. Such things are ordered by the forces of each individual nature. People will be true to themselves whatever part they may determine upon; only the difference is that some try to play a higher part and fail perhaps, and are ashamed, and others try for a smaller part and succeed, and are content.

Mr. Reynolds was still turning over these things in his mind, when Miss Reynolds, the little lady in the dressing-gown and morning wrapper, peeped into the room. She saw her brother standing there, listless, unoccupied. The *penello volante*, so rapid, so assured in its flash, hung idly by his side. She could see his face reflected in the looking-glass from which he used to paint.

A very strange expression of pity and regret appeared in his looks. Were tears in his placid eyes? No! that was not so; for he started and turned quickly, and seeing her, asked in his usual voice what she wanted?

'I want my pocket-handkerchief, brother,' said Miss Reynolds, startled. 'I forgot it last night;' and then she took courage, and went up to him and took his hand, paint stock, and all, and held it in both hers, and looked at him beneath her big cap—'I should wish you happy

brother,' she said; 'I saw a certain lady in tears, standing in this very spot, a few hours ago; at least, if not here, it was there by the great easel; or, no! they have moved it, and put the little one in its place; and oh! brother, you are still a young man, and much admired by many; do not trifle with a sweet girl's happiness, to say nothing of your own, not that any one can judge for you, but one can't help one's hopes; and happiness is such a blessing, and must add so much to one's life, at least so I should imagine.'

'Thank you, Frances,' said Mr. Reynolds, both touched and vexed by her agitation, as he always was. 'Thank you, my dear; I hope we shall all be happy.'

'*She* seemed sadly disturbed,' said Miss Reynolds, 'a little bird . . . .'

'Thank you, my dear,' said her brother again, patting her shoulder. 'Leave me now, I must go to my work, or I shall be sadly disturbed.' Miss Reynolds opened her mouth to say more, but her courage failed. She was never at ease with her brother, and yet her kind heart yearned towards him, and she longed to say something to comfort him in his evident depression. She was beginning another allusion to an old adage which she thought applicable to the present state of things; but he again signed to her to stop, and Marchi, who had followed her into the room, now announced an early visitor. Miss Reynolds, suddenly conscious of her petticoat and dressing jacket, turned and fled.

CHAPTER XV.

IN HER HOME.

The sympathies and consolations of light, of harmony, of work, are as effectual as many a form of words. They are *substitutions* of one particular manner of feeling and expression for another. To hungry, naked, and imprisoned souls, art ministers with a bountiful hand, shows them a way of escape (even though they carry their chains with them); leads silently, pointing into a still and tranquil world enclosed within our noise-bound life, where true and false exist, but harassing duty and conflicting consciences are not, nor remorse, nor its terrors, nor sorrowful disappointments. A wrong perspective or faulty drawing may be crimes in this peaceful land; renewed effort is the repentance there practised. Angelica was never more grateful to her pursuit than now when time was difficult on her hands. The house was not to be ready for three weeks, and during these she must needs remain in Charles Street.

She tried not to think much, but the sense of estrangement was there nevertheless—estrangement from the three people whose good opinion she most valued. If only Antonio would give some sign; if only Mr. Reynolds would come—if only Lady W. would be her own kind self—how suddenly eased her heavy heart would be! She painted steadily, rising betimes to catch the first gleam of the sun dawning through the crowding mists.

Orders came in from one side and another. A message from the Queen, that filled her with excitement, was transmitted by Lord Henry, who had been to Windsor. Lady W.'s coldness did not change; she scarcely congratulated her, she seemed utterly unconcerned, and gave the poor child many a pang that she was unconscious of ever having really deserved.

Mr. Reynolds came not; Antonio came not; Lady W. was as much absent as though she were gone on a long journey. Would she ever return, Angelica wondered? Besides the natural separations of life, of circumstance, there is also one great difficulty to be surmounted. It is that of moods and mental position. Our secret journeys and flights have to be allowed for as much as those open departures we make with many farewells, and luggage, and tickets, and noisy bustle.

There was a powdering-closet on the second story of the house in Charles Street, adjoining Lady Diana's room. It was only a small room, divided by a wall with

a hole in it and a sliding panel scooped to the neck. On one side stood the barber and his assistant, to the other came the household with the heads that needed powdering; they would boldly pass them through the aperture, by which means their clothes were preserved from the flying clouds. Lord W. was standing in this guillotine, receiving a last touch from the barber, when Angelica passed the open door one morning on her way to the nursery upstairs. She turned, hearing herself called.

'Is that Miss Kauffmann? I cannot see; pray wait one minute;' and in a minute my lord appeared in full dress, with his star, and his smart velvet coat, and snowy wig, and gleaming buckles. He was going to Court. He had been invited to dine at the Royal table. Little Judith and Charlotte and Elizabeth were trotting downstairs to see him start; before they came up, Lord W. turned to Angelica, and in a hurried voice said, 'I wanted to speak to you. If you think, dear madam, of deciding upon a house, will you make use of my security? would you let me advance you a hundred pounds?' and he hastily pulled some notes out of his embroidered pocket, and tried quickly to pass them into her hand.

Angelica thanked the golden little benefactor with grateful emotion: 'Indeed, I would gladly accept your kindness,' she said, openly, 'but Lady Diana has lent me some money.'

She would have said more, but she saw him look

uneasy; a door opened, and the figure of Lady W. appeared upon the landing. 'What are you plotting?' said she: 'I seem to have disturbed you,' and she flashed a quick penetrating look at Angelica.

'My lord is plotting to do me kindness and to give me help. He would help me pay the rent of the house I have engaged,' said Angelica. She went up to Lady W. and looked at her with a great sweetness. 'Indeed, dear lady, you would have little to fear if none but such as I were to conspire against you—I, who owe so much, so very much, to your goodness.'

'Do you still remember that?' said Lady W., softened by the very charm which raised her jealousy. She slowly put out her hand to Angel, who held it gratefully in her own. For a minute the two women looked hard at one another. Then Lady W. suddenly melted and kissed the young painter on the brow. 'Take this,' she said, 'for my sake,' and she slipped a ring off her own finger to Angelica's: it was a little cameo set in brilliants, which the girl wore long after. This tacit reconciliation greatly softened the pain of parting, for the younger woman.

As she stepped across the threshold of the little house she had taken, Angel's heart beat tumultuously, and her eyes sparkled. Here at last was a home. After her many wanderings, her long journeyings and uncertainties here was a home. Here she could bring her father; dear,

poor, proud, silly papa! Here she could work in peace, live her life, and be beholden to none.

The woman servant Lady W. had recommended was standing, curtseying, at the foot of the stairs. The lamp had been lighted. It was a Roman three-beaked lamp that Angelica had found in some old shop, and bought after much hesitation. A fire had been lit in the studio. The little old house stood warm and welcoming, with an indescribable sense of rest about it, of proprietorship.

No bride coming to her new happy home for the first time could have felt more proudly excited than this little impulsive, well-meaning, foolish creature, who had, by sheer hard work and spirited determination, earned a right to this panelled nest. There was a drawing-room in front, with windows into Golden Square: that was the studio. It led into her bedroom, beyond which came a dressing-room. On the ground floor was her father's bedroom; and the dining-room, with windows looking to the Square, and wooden cupboards by the fireplace. Angelica, to her surprise, found a beautiful old oak cabinet standing in the studio when she entered it on this eventful evening. She eagerly asked from whom it came. Had Lady W. graciously sent it as a sign of goodwill? The woman could tell her nothing. Some men had brought it the day before. They had left a piece of paper with Miss Kauffmann's name. She had put it on the shelf.

The piece of paper told its story, although there was

no name but Angelica's own upon it. But how well she knew those straight lines, black and even, although here and there the letters seemed to tremble, as writing might do that was seen through water. Antonio had not quite forgotten her then? he was not quite gone—dear, kind old Antonio! Angelica went up and kissed the wooden doors that seemed to speak a welcome from her new-found, faithful old friend.

She was dancing about the room half the evening, straightening her few possessions, pulling out canvases, spreading her two or three mats to the best advantage. Then she began to write to her father. He must delay no longer; his house was ready; his child was longing for his presence. She sent money for the journey; she should be miserable until she had seen him sitting there just opposite to the fire. He must not mind dark days and cold biting winds; he should be warmed and comforted in his home whatever the world outside might prove to be. . . Then she told him how the orders were coming in faster than she could execute them. And Antonio had sent a beautiful gift that made the whole place splendid. She could not thank him: she knew not where to seek him. . . .

As she wrote, Angelica looked up, hearing a sound. The door opened: there stood Antonio himself, looking thin indeed, grey, more bent than usual, but kind, smiling, natural: his own gentlest self. His affection was ready

to show itself by bright and friendly signs that evening, not by cross-grained reprimands and doubts.

These happy meetings come to all now and then; unexpected, unhoped for.

Angelica cried out with many questions, welcomes, explanations. How had he come? Was he hidden inside the cabinet? she asked with a laughing, grateful look.

'I am very glad you liked it,' said Antonio, smiling. 'I thought it would please you when I saw it in the old shop at Windsor.'

'Kind Tonio!' said Angelica. 'But'—and she hesitated. 'How could you . . . it must have cost——'

Antonio began to look black, and scowled at her for an instant.

'You think so much of the cost of things, Angelica. You measure your gifts by their value. Be reassured, the cabinet was a bargain, and I have plenty of money just now. I am painting the ceilings of a royal palace at Frogmore, and moreover I am desired to ask you to undertake one of the rooms.'

'I!' cried Angelica. 'I have never done anything of the sort.'

'Mrs. Mary Moser is engaged upon a very pretty set of panels,' Zucchi continued, 'and they would be glad of some of your work as well. You might paint allegories to your heart's content,' he said, smiling.

'You are a magician, Antonio!' cried Angelica, gaily,

leaning back on her chair, and looking at him with the old familiar winning eyes. 'Only wait till my father comes, and then I will go anywhere, do anything. They tell me I am to paint the Queen and the Princess shortly, at Windsor Castle. Is it not like a dream to be at home once more—to have a real house with doors and windows? To be sitting here, you and I, on each side of the fire?'

'It is like a dream to see you once more at ease, and in peace,' said Antonio, between his teeth, 'and to find that your head is not quite turned by your flatterers, since you can look pleased to welcome an old plain-spoken friend in a shabby coat.'

It was one of the happiest evenings Angelica ever spent in all her life. The ease and liberty seemed delightful, after the restraint of the house in Charles Street. Antonio's presence was happiness too; he was in his best and most sympathetic mood. He had returned to her. No thought of what might or what might not be came to disturb them. Mr. Reynolds was also in Miss Angel's thoughts, that other friend, so tranquil, so reliable, surely she need never feel a doubt about him. Was she right! Are calm ripples and placid silences the proof of deepest waters?

Antonio after some time remembered to explain his appearance. He had heard from Mr. Cipriani that she was coming to live in Golden Square, he said; the news had filled him with happiness. Then he smiled and added

that he had not come up from Windsor inside the cabinet, but on the carrier's cart.

Angelica asked him, with some curiosity, where he had been living all this time, and Antonio told her that he had been staying with some good friends at Eton. 'My friend is a kind old man, with six daughters,' said Zucchi. 'He is the drawing-master, and lives in the College. The young ladies are charming. They would be only too glad to receive you, if you should be sent for to work at the Castle; they would make you very welcome.'

'Six young ladies!' cried Angelica; 'take care, take care, Antonio.'

Antonio was silent for a moment. 'A painted trellis would be out of place,' he said suddenly, looking up at the ceiling, 'in this smoky city; but I will paint you a trellis, if you like.'

'Yes,' said Angelica, 'and paint me a little blue sky, Antonio, and a bird, and some scent of orange-flowers.' So they went on talking, and the warm happy hours passed on. Then a clock began to strike slowly.

'Is that twelve?' said Miss Angel.

'I don't know,' said Antonio. Neither of them cared to shorten this peaceful meeting, snatched out of the cold and darkness and noise and racket all round about, and belonging to their friendship. But as the clock finished striking, Antonio's heart began to sink, and he felt

somehow that the happy evening was over. And the Kauffmann, too, sat looking thoughtfully into the fire, of which while they talked, by some chance, one-half had gone out and turned to blackness, while the other still burnt ruddy.

'Look here,' said Angelica, 'how oddly the fire burns.' Antonio poked it with his foot.

'You know the superstition?' he answered; 'they were speaking of it at Dr. Starr's only a day or two ago. It means, so they say, that two people who love each other are about to be parted;' and he looked at Angelica as he spoke. She was playing with her wristlets; a little flush was in her cheeks. 'Antonio,' she said, 'do you think that people who are parted once can meet again?'

'That depends very much upon fortune's favours, and still more upon their own wish,' said Antonio, with a smile. 'Chance gives you a sight of people; but you have yourself to make one in the meeting;' and then his voice softened. 'We *have* met to-night, Angelica, and have been very happy. Perhaps, next time I see you, some lord will be here, with his coach-and-six, and you will not have so much time to give me.'

'Time is nothing at all in friendship; you can't measure things by time,' said Miss Angel. 'There is no lord in question, Antonio; but, shall I tell you all? there *is* some one I often think of.'

'Some one who loves you?' Antonio asked in a dry

voice. He was standing up and preparing to go. 'Can he keep you, Angelica? Has he got plenty of money? Is he highly esteemed at Court? Has he servants in proper liveries?'

'How can you speak in that unkind way!' she cried. 'I open my heart to you, and this is the way you answer me.'

'Excuse me,' said Antonio; 'I was only talking as all your other friends will talk; for myself I say, if you love any one from your heart, were he as rich as Crœsus, marry him; ask no one's advice, and make no more difficulties.'

'He is not as rich as Crœsus. I did not know I loved him when he spoke to me,' said Angel, penitent without much cause; 'but when you spoke just now about friends meeting, I could not help thinking of him, and wondering if it might ever come about. I think, Antonio, if he spoke to me again . . . He is older than I am; I can trust him and look to him.'

'Is it that lord I saw in the box at the play?' asked Antonio.

'It is no lord,' Angelica repeated, very much agitated; 'it is a worker like ourselves; it is Mr. Reynolds, Antonio.'

'What! the deaf man?' said the young painter.

'I thought you would have cared about my interest,' said Miss Angel, hurt by his tone and change of manner;

'but I see you are indifferent, that you have not one thought to give to me.'

'You see very wrongly,' the other answered. 'I could even appprove of your marriage if you cared for the proposed husband. But that you do not Angelica. Goodnight!' and he was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

THROUGH WINTER-TIME TO SPRING.

While Antonio was walking home through the black midnight streets; while Mr. Reynolds was sitting in his own studio composing an article for the 'Idler' (the studio was still haunted by some paling ghost of Miss Angel); while the painter had quietly made up his mind to abandon the siege of the difficult fortress he had incautiously attacked, the fortress itself was secretly preparing to surrender, for it was built upon the sandy foundation of impulse, of youthful ardent imagination.

With all her faults, as I have said, Angelica was a genuine woman, incapable of deceiving any one, although she herself could be deceived, and whatever she might realise now, she had truly felt at the time that gratified vanity was no return for true feeling. Misunderstandings are far more difficult things than people imagine in love or in friendship. Some instinct protects travellers in that strange country where all is instinct, and if they

disagree it is that from some secret reason they do not belong to each other, for quarrels are nothing to those who are united in sympathy

If Mr. Reynolds spoke to her again, would she give him a different answer? 'Perhaps I might graciously be pleased to allow that I was less indifferent than I had once appeared to be,' she thought, and she tossed back her curls and opened wide her eyes, and discovered it was nearly one o'clock and time for bed.

Antonio came next morning before Angel was up. He was used to workmen, and to hurrying their reluctant hammers and whitening pails. He took upon himself to dismiss two or three on the spot, feeling sure that Angelica's little store would be soon expended if she gave orders on the same scale as Lady W., who had sent in this army in all kindness and inexperience. Zucchi himself acted as chief artificer and foreman: the men seeing him take his place so naturally, imagined that he was the owner of the house and obeyed his orders. When Miss Angel appeared in her wrapping-gown and cap, she found that Antonio had accomplished wonders in a hard morning's work, that everything was in order in the studio. The Princess, followed by the whole Court, might come when she would.

'I hope you forgive me for interfering,' said Zucchi; 'you must remember how quickly money goes in this

country, and that one man's day here costs three times as much as with us.'

'The days are much shorter and blacker here than with us,' said Angelica. 'They ought to be cheap enough: how good of you, Tonio, to come to my help; what shall you want for your work? See here,' she said, running into her room and coming out again with Lady Diana's pocket-book. 'I have saved 80*l.*, and Lady Diana has lent 100*l.* for my rent. I am to get 15*l.* for three fans I am painting, to-morrow.'

'Do you mean that this is all you have got to reckon on?' cried Zucchi. 'I thought those rich had loaded you with their miserable favours. Is this their dole in return for what you have done for them? You will be starving in a month or two, if you go on at this rate, my poor child: where is your father, that old mummy? Why does he not come to take care of you?' he said, very much agitated.

Antonio, brought up in the severe order of poverty, had an exaggerated horror of want and debt, as he had of Angelica's incapacity. Angelica was perfectly justified under the circumstances in doing as she had done; but it is certain that Antonio's cranky anxieties saved her money, labour, and many a consequent worry just at this time.

He used to come for an hour in the morning and for

an hour in the evening. Angelica was not always there; but on her return she was sure to find some trace of his presence and of the industry of the trembling hands. From the very first so many people came to Angelica's studio that his presence was little remarked upon. The Lord Essex of those days was her great friend and patron Lord Henry Belmore was not to be rebuffed, and Lord W. would also hurry in and out occasionally; Mr. Boydell and his brother, the artistic alderman, were entirely captivated with the young artist, and so indeed were many others too numerous to mention.

All that winter the little house had been alive with voices, and footsteps, and greetings, and exclamations of wonder and admiration from friends, lovers, patrons, and admirers of both sexes. In the engrossment of settling down, of feeling her own success and importance, Angelica thought less of Mr. Reynolds than she did later when the first excitement of this new way of living had somewhat palled upon her. Who could have imagined that this cold foggy life was to be so full of vibrating emotion and of romance? Rome, with all her wonders, had contained far more commonplace experiences than this black and vapour-haunted city. Lady Diana came often at first, then more rarely, for she looked on with doubtful approbation at Miss Angel's experiences. Lady W. also came. She would look in on her way home. She seemed to have

forgiven Angelica. Angel, standing in the deep windows of her studio, could see the torches flaring up the street as my lady travelled homewards in her chair; as the lights disappeared into the fog, Angel would ask herself if she was indeed the little girl of a year ago, who had stood eating grapes and looking over the Rialto. The remembrance of it sometimes came over her so vividly that she seemed to breathe the air, to hear the voices, the sound of the feet trailing upon the bridge. Zucchi's voice did not jar upon these recollections, although he sent them flying.

All that winter Angelica was too busy, too engrossed to look back often; the present was all in all. She rarely met Mr. Reynolds; but when she did come across him he seemed to avoid her, she thought, and just at this time she was content that it should be so, and glad of the postponement. That all would come right she never questioned; of her power to call anybody to her feet she scarcely doubted. 'I can look at people,' she once told Antonio, half in jest and half in earnest, 'and make them turn pale and do anything I wish; but I don't, Antonio. I could make you much kinder if I tried. But I am used to your scoldings.'

Antonio left the room, banging the door.

So time, and sitters, and days passed by in turn, the house in Golden Square prospered and flourished, and

Angelica was delighted with her own triumphs and successes, and the time drew near for old Kauffmann's arrival.

It was not for want of asking that he did not come before. How proud the old man was at his daughter's success. He read her letters to his sister, the farmer's widow, to the dairy-maid, to the curé after mass, to the goatherd, to the very goats upon the mountain slope. The whole valley participated in the Kauffmann's distant honours and glories. They urged him to lose no time, to start off immediately to the golden scene of his daughter's triumph. 'In London, that great city, the applause,' says Rossi, 'was universal. The public papers contained verses in different languages written in her praise.'

It required no little courage and dogged opposition on Antonio's part to continue his system of detraction and plain speaking as he called it. One can never account for the curious phases of people's mind. To him Angelica was an inadequate genius; but a more complete woman perhaps than any other he had ever known; more complete in her feminine power than all the six Miss Starrs at Windsor put together; than the Princess of Brunswick in her velvet mantles; than Lady W. with all her beauty, her gentle affectations, and cultivated vapours.

Sometimes Antonio coming in would find the young

painter sitting surrounded by a circle of admirers. Not unfrequently she would be talking nonsense in a high, ecstatic voice. 'Yes!' she would say, 'I will confess to you all that it has been a something beyond me that has ever driven me onward through life, seeking for the most beautiful and ideal representation of the truth. That is why I try to give some deep allegorical meaning to all that I depict. If I have painted this picture of my friend Mary Moser as "Prudence sacrificing to Duty and enchaining the wings of Cupid," it is because I have felt that in the most commonplace form and feature' (here there was a little suppressed titter in the circle which Angel did not notice—Antonio Zucchi alone frowned and looked annoyed) 'there is often a moral, a suggestion far beyond the passing moment, and to that we must cling if we would not utterly weary and sicken of the dull disappointments and realities of life.' She started up as she spoke, a slim prophetess in a white falling dress, pointing to the picture she had just completed. Some classical recess in the wall just behind made an arch above her head. It was an April evening; the window was open; the dusk was creeping in. A great vase of spring flowers stood on a table by her side.

'I do not comprehend,' said Antonio, in his slow English, 'why an allegory should be of more value to the world than a truth. I should have imagined until now that a good likeness, carefully painted, is what one wishes

for, in remembrance of a friend, not a classical allusion to something else which does not concern anybody in parti cular.'

Miss Angel blushed up. Some secret conscience warned her that she had been making a display, but why was Antonio to lecture her in public; she said nothing, but she showed by her manner that she was displeased.

Contradiction from Zucchi always roused the secret gipsy in Angelica's character. True friends are sorts of magnifying glasses. Antonio was a true friend, and saw her perhaps as she really was, with some slight exaggeration.

For Antonio alone, perhaps, she was but herself—no wonder such as all these people would have declared her to be, no mighty mistress of her art, but a sweet and impulsive-hearted girl whose arch bright looks, half-saucy, half-appealing, went straight to his heart, whose constant self-denying work and application he knew how to appreciate. Perhaps she pursued her way too triumphantly; perhaps if her pictures had cost her more, they might have been better worth the sweet lifetime she had given to them, the hours of youth, of gaiety, and natural amusement and interest sacrificed to these smiling ladies vaguely waving their arms or reclining upon impossible banks. He praised her colouring, and Angel's cheeks would burn in answer. Her sentiment was charming, but her drawing was absurd, and he did not scruple to tell her so.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GAME OF CARDS.

A GREAT many things exist that it is unless to close one's eyes upon, and yet the very wants and disappointments and ineffectual efforts may themselves be a sort of proof of the possibility of the things to which we cannot quite reach, the love we cannot quite hold, the duty we cannot quite fulfil. Is life a science? Are not its very deviations sometimes the key to its secrets? Are we all philosophers with instincts which set us to work upon its awful problems?

Angel was not philosophizing just now. She had not written her little flyleaves of late, or sat pondering her simple articles of faith. I do not think she was living with her best self all these months. A new phase had come over her; it is one which people decry, but to me it has always seemed a sort of game no better nor worse than any other—this great game of the London world and its odd interests and superstitions. From being a spectator you are insensibly absorbed in the performance. You begin to understand the points, the tricks, the turns of it

—the value of this trump-card played against that one. Two for a queen, three for a king, and knaves and diamonds have their value too, and you unconsciously sort your hand and play your trick, and find yourself one day deeply excited by this lively living whist-marking, dealing out, bidding. It is but a game, and one day the humblest player may throw down his cards with a weary shrug. I don't know that there is greater harm than in any other pursuit, until the time comes when men give their honour and women stake their heart's truth, and their children's happiness, and the peace of their homes. Was Angelica in danger of staking her poor little heart?

Miss Angel was not in love with anybody, as I have said. She thought more of Mr. Reynolds than of any other person. If Mr. Reynolds had come back, she would have accepted him. She always turned to her remembrance of him with gratitude and confidence, and somehow her conscience approved, but Mr. Reynolds himself seemed to avoid her. His reserve gave her some concern, but she trusted to Miss Reynolds to remove it. Although Mr. Reynolds absented himself, Miss Reynolds was her constant visitor, and from her the young painter used to hear of his doings— of the work he was engaged upon, of the people he lived with. Lord Charlemont had proposed him for the Dilettante, the beautiful Duchess of

Manchester was sitting to him, so was Nelly O'Brien, whose bright eyes still meet our admiring glances. He was as constant as ever to his club; he came, he went, he worked, perhaps harder than usual, and yet——

'Something is amiss,' said Miss Reynolds, hesitating. 'Perhaps you can tell me what it is?' she whispered one day, with one of her impulsive darts.

They were riding in Mr. Reynolds' big coach, which had just then stopped at Dr. Burney's door, in Poland Street. More than once the great primrose coach had conveyed Angelica to Dr. Burney's musical parties. On this occasion, in an interval of Piozzi's singing, Miss Reynolds returned to the discussion.

'He is not himself,' said the elder lady, anxiously. 'What have you said to him. I have never seen my brother so dull—so depressed in manner——'

'I have said nothing to him. I think he has forgot me altogether,' said Miss Angel. 'The other evening at the masqued ball, when I would have spoken to him (I had sent away a couple of friends on purpose), he would not come near me; he merely said, "Are you enjoying the scene, my dear young lady? Do not let me be the means of dispersing your attendant knights;" and he passed on. Tell me—what does it mean?' cried Miss Angel, suddenly, and she grasped Miss Reynolds' mitten in her quick hand. 'It is hard to be estranged from those

whose affection one values.' Angel's eyes filled with tears as she spoke, her fan slipped to the ground, someone sprang forward to pick it up—a stately-looking person in mourning garb. It was an old friend who had lately appeared in London society, Count de Horn, whom she had first known at Venice. Angelica took the fan from him with a pretty little '*moue*,' and let him kiss her hand as he returned it and departed with one more bow. She hastily brushed her tears away behind its sheltering Cupids. She was not sorry that Miss Reynolds should see she was not without adorers still, although Mr. Reynolds chose to be absent for such long weeks together. She was surprised when she looked up to notice some expression of disapprobation in Miss Reynolds' face; her eyebrows were working, her little round button mouth was quivering.

'Oh! it is not I, dear child, whose opinion matters, said Miss Reynolds, looking about perplexed, and answering Angel's unspoken words, 'nor does my brother's, for the matter of that, and indeed it was I who said it, and he only replied, "Poor child! she is not used to our English ways." But you must have remarked that he *is* fastidious about ladies' behaviour—he puts me in mind of my father in that; and if he objects to the persons who pay you court, dear child,' said Miss Reynolds, tenderly pressing Angel's hand in hers, 'has he not a good reason—one that you cannot resent?'

Miss Angel blushed up. Miss Reynolds coloured in her turn and went on without stopping. 'People say that my brother is not the first to have some reason to complain. You do not mean—you do not realize—oh, my dear, forgive an old woman who has long, long since passed beyond such things, but who can still remember and who, if she speaks harshly, only wishes you well from her very heart. You are worthy even of his affection, and his sadness cuts me to the quick.'

Still Angelica did not answer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BE THE FIRE ASHES.

Some odd phase had come over the girl. A week ago I believe she would have turned away from such words, preoccupied perhaps, or amused, or offended. Now it seemed as it she had for the first time faced the *seriousness* of life as it passed—realized the fact that people could suffer from her light indifference—understood that slight and indeterminate as most events are, they are, after all, our lives, and we have nothing else to live with.

She had played with other people's happiness of late. She had had real happiness and inflicted real pain. She had received a lesson from Mr. Reynolds that she scarcely deserved from *him*, although it might perhaps have applied more truly to her relations with Zucchi, with poor Fuseli, about whom her conscience did not acquit her. Mr. Dance, too had reproached her. She would forget it all if she could. Why could she not forget it? Were they all speaking the truth? Was it indeed an

unpardonable crime to be pleased and interested and happy in the society of more than one person?

As thoughts run on indeterminately without words or sense, they turn into moods, into phases of mind. All the next day Angelica came and went about her work with the impression upon her of her conversation with Miss Reynolds. Coming in from a short walk, she found her old maid-servant standing in the passage; she was holding a great bunch of roses that had just come from Leicester Fields with a note from Miss Reynolds:—

My Dearest Miss Kauffmann, — My brother sends you these from his garden at Richmond; he hopes to do himself the honour of calling upon you to-day. Shall you be at home at about five o'clock.

Your ever most faithful and affectionate Servant,

F. R.

All that morning Angel had been somewhat tired. Her painting had not satisfied her. Lady Diana had come, and finding Count de Horn in the studio, had gone away almost immediately with marked coldness of manner.

Angelica began to long for a little of the placid sunshine of old days. The roses and some straggling sunbeam wandering up the old staircase carried her right away to the Coire of early days, scarce remembered of late, in her perplexities.

The Count's manner had vexed her, she could hardly tell why. She felt instinctively that Mr. Reynolds would not have approved. It was not familiarity; it was un-

easiness, some want of bearing. How different was his affected courtliness from Mr. Reynolds' simple courtesy!

She put the roses carefully in water. They had given her no little pleasure. Their fragrance filled the room as she sat down to her painting, and worked on undisturbed by outward things; but nevertheless her hand trembled as Zucchi's did. The canvas seemed to dazzle before her. Some strange tumult had taken possession of the young painter.

She was engaged upon a pretty and delicate medallion which Lord Essex had ordered. Some Venus, some Cupid, reclining in balmy gardens very far from Golden Square and from its work-a-day inhabitants. To our excited Angelica the light seemed flashing from the picture, the Cupid's eyes seemed to meet hers. She felt almost frightened at last, and turned away with an impatient movement, as the tall doors open wide, and with the quiet swinging step and dignity that were peculiar to him, Mr. Reynolds walks into the room. For a minute Miss Angel, usually so outcoming, was silent and embarrassed in her reception. He was calm and friendly, greeted her somewhat shyly. She saw him presently glance at the flowers.

'Thank you for sending them,' she said. 'You know my love for roses. These have come out early.'

'Some roses we know bloom in November,' said the painter, with a little bow to the November rose now quivering before him.

Angelica looked up somewhat wistfully. She could not face those anxious, bland glances. Something—what was it?—in his calm superiority seemed to fascinate her will, to compel her willing service. To this impetuous, impressionable, fantastical young person, it seemed as if his judgment and tender consideration might be the calm haven for which she longed. Poor little thing, she was suddenly tired of the rout, so tired of it all—tired of her hard work, longing for some anchor to her labouring craft.

She dragged forward a chair, and bestirred herself to make him welcome. 'I knew you would come, Mr. Reynolds; something told me you would come to-day, even before I received your flowers.'

'What made you expect me?' said Mr. Reynolds, looking surprised. 'I have often thought of coming, and wished to come, but it was only this afternoon when my sister told me that you had honoured me by remarking my absence that I decided—— '

He stopped, arrested by the strange expression of her face. There was something spiritual, half rapt, half excited, in her looks at that moment. She shook back her great curl; her colour rose.

Had he been unhappy all this time? So his words now seemed to her to imply (they had, in truth, no such meaning). Could she set it all right, make him happy once more: by a single word ensure her own lasting

peace, his ever-present friendship? She started from her chair.

'Perhaps some instinct spoke to me,' she cried, a little wildly; 'perhaps we are less indifferent to each other than you may have imagined. I have not forgotten the honour you once did me. If you also remember it—if you also remember,' she repeated, 'as your sister has led me to suppose that you do, I might give a different answer now to that which I gave you then.'

She looked up, expecting to see a smile upon his face a reflection of her own excitement. 'I have thought much and deeply since last we met,' she said. 'It is not too late to try and make amends to you for my mistake.' Angelica's heart was throbbing fast.

Reynolds looked very pale, and for a moment he in turn could scarcely meet Angel's looks. 'My child,' he said, 'I will not, must not take advantage of your confidence. When I spoke to you before, I was in a different mood, carried away by a passing impulse, which I cannot regret, since it has brought me this generous mark of your goodness. But you were right in your decision. You yourself caused me to reflect. I could not hope to make one of your young and ardent nature happy, and I could never be happy, feeling that I had sacrificed your life to a friendship which will be yours whatever chances. I scarcely know what words to use to tell you, my dear, of my respect and gratitude—to tell you how I am

honoured by your noble confidence. I hope to prove to you,' he added, 'that I am not unworthy of it.'

Angelica scarcely heard what words he was saying. Afterwards she remembered them, and they were some consolation to her; but at the time some sudden feeling of overwhelming shame, of indignation, almost of horror at what had occurred, overcame her completely. It seemed to her that she had been mad, bereft of her reason; and now for once Angelica spoke against her nature, against her own conviction. 'You are right,' she said, coldly; 'I spoke under misapprehension, we have neither of us that regard for each other which would warrant the step I foolishly proposed—a step suggested by another person.'

'But we are friends for life,' said Mr. Reynolds. 'Is it not so?'

She could not answer at that moment, and she was thankful when, by some curious chance, Lady W. was announced by the man-servant, coming in for a second time upon their estrangement. That first explanation now seemed almost a meeting compared to this cruel moment. How Angel got through the next half-hour she scarcely knew. She was conscious of Mr. Reynolds' mute appeal and courteous, grateful, almost deprecating manner; of Lady W.'s renewed interest and affection. It all seemed to her to be meant for some other person—some one who was not present. She was thankful when they left her at

last. Zucchi happened to come in, and she imploringly whispered to him to take them all away, that she wanted to be alone. She *must* be alone, and she sank down upon the low couch in the now darkened room. She covered her face with her hands, with a sort of despair. Was there no single person to trust in all this world?

Had she been actuated by vanity when she turned to this grave and good man? Ah, no! her conscience absolved her; but what had she done?

Miss Reynolds had deceived her unpardonably and most cruelly. Angelica felt as if she could forgive her friend in time, but not yet. And as for her friendship, was this her experience of it? So she sat there, half worn out, without spirit to move. She felt that there was something in her that the slightest movement or word would awaken.

Was this what she had unwillingly inflicted upon others—this miserable torture of heart? Had some demon taken hold of her in her trouble?

CHAPTER XIX.

IN GOLDEN SQUARE.

What is a mood? Whence does it come? Why does it overwhelm us with its strange stupidities. Here we sit quietly in our chairs, and what adventures are ours. What comings and goings. What momentary emotion and curious changes and conflicts; armies of thought sweep past, experience, memory, hope, are all ranged in battle array, sometimes the fight lasts from daybreak until sunset and on into the night, nor is it perhaps till the morning that we know which army has retreated and to which the field belongs. For a time some such battle was raging in Angelica's heart as she sat quite quiet upon the couch; then came silence and the deadness of humiliation. Some sudden hatred and indignation had come over Miss Angel, like a dry east wind parching her very soul. She had not deserved this, she said; she had been sincere; she had not sought her own advantage in all this; and it was hard to be humiliated.

To Angelica this strange distorted mood came as a punishment for other things, for the gentle vanities and infidelities which had brought her to this pass, which had led her to overrate her own worth and judgment, and that perhaps of the persons whom she honoured.

It is Goethe who says that those who will not forgive themselves for small faults are persons who overrate their own importance. Angelica of late had had many excuses for overrating herself, and perhaps for this very reason suffered more acutely than she might have done at another time from the mistake she had made.

Young, ardent, reckless; how was she to realise to herself the calm imperturbability of a nature which was not a passionate one or quickly responsive to things that were not tangible, and to which it was unaccustomed.

The determination to which Mr. Reynolds came was one which in the end, perhaps, was best for all, for Angelica herself and for himself, but the wisdom of his judgment could only be measured by time. Perhaps it was some dim unacknowledged consciousness of the truth of his own want of earnestness which made him mistrust his sentiment for Miss Angel, its strength and power of endurance.

He walked away moderately satisfied with the part he had played; Angel sat quite still, as I have said, looking into the gathering dusk, watching the lights fade; they

changed from blue twilight into grey and dimmest shadow; chill, cold, silent, the spring evening gathered round her, and her white face and figure faded into its darkness.

Fate is kind sometimes with unexpected blessings, that seem all the brighter when they come in hours of twilight. Open a door into a room full of sorrowful shames and regrets. Flash the light of a candle upon all these vapours and dismal consternations.

There is a sound of voices on the stairs; there have been exclamations and thumpings and summonings; someone is calling out her name eagerly, and the noise comes nearer and the light starts into the room, and somehow Angel, out of her twilight shame, suddenly finds herself in light, in love, enfolded in two trembling arms that hold her tight close to a shabby old beating heart. She is blessed almost before she knows who it is that has come; she feels she is safe, scarce knowing how security has reached her; she is safe upon her father's heart with the benediction of his tender faith upon her; she knows all this almost before she has realised that it is he. She had not even heard the footsteps travelling upstairs, so engrossed had she been by her dreary present. That present is over, changed in the twinkling of an eye. She gives a little happy cry, tears fill her eyes; a sudden flood of ease flows to her heart, the heavy load seems uplifted

as she clasps and clings to the old man, sobbing and at peace once more.

In after years that moment came back to her sometimes, and that meeting; the thought of her dim despairing loneliness, of the father's love outside the closed door. That faithful blessing (never absent indeed in its tender infallibility), had been coming nearer and nearer to its expression at the time when she needed its comfort.

It may be our blessing as well as our punishment that the *now* is not all with us as we hold it, nor the moment quite over that is past. It is never quite too late to remember, never quite to late to love; although the heart no longer throbs that we might have warmed, the arms are laid low that would have opened to us. But who shall say that time and place are to be a limit to the intangible spirit of love and reconciliation, and that new-found trust and long delayed gratitude may not mean more than we imagine in our lonely and silenced regret?

John Joseph was not alone, the porters were following carrying up his trunk, with the great cords and padlocks. It contained a cheese among other treasures, and a goat-skin waistcoat, a present from his sister-in-law, and some linen for Angelica's own wear, and a peasant's hat and bodice from Coire, that Miss Angel had wished for.

Behind the hair trunk and holding by Antonio's hand came a small person, of some ten year's experience, climbing

the stairs, with weary little feet, looking about with dark observant eyes, set in a shy ingenuous round face.

This was a little orphan cousin of Angelica's, Rosa, from Uncle Michele's farm, who had been dispatched to keep house with her grand relations in London.

Old John had a liking for the little creature, who put him in mind of his own Angelica at her age, and he had brought her off without much pressing; he only stipulated that Michele should pay her travelling expenses as far as Lyons. 'Couldn't we walk, Uncle John?' said little Rosa, anxiously; but Uncle John told her she should come in a coach with horses and postilions. What would Angelica say if they were to arrive all in rags and covered with dust? They might have come in rags, in sackcloth and ashes. Angelica had no words wherewith to bid them welcome; they were come home, that was enough. How had Antonio known they were arriving. What fortunate chance had sent him to meet them? The fortunate chance was that Antonio, being anxious about Miss Angel's woebegone looks an hour before, had walked back by the winding street at the square corner (that street which led so often to her house), and he had been standing outside looking up at the windows, when old Kauffmann, shaken by his long journey, agitated, suspicious, fearing murder, and I know not what dangers, drove up in a hired coach. The first person the old man saw was Antonio,

with folded arms, standing upon the pavement. He could scarcely believe in his good fortune. Was *this* then the house, *this* Angelica's palace? The tall windows opened upon the iron rails, carved and bent into shape as iron railings used to be in those days. Her door was also ornamented with delicate tracery, and on either side a narrow window let the light into the flagged hall, where a black-and-white pavement had been laid down by some former inhabitant. The place is little changed. Only yesterday we crossed the quaint little square, with its bare trees. The drifting clouds shone with city lights and gleams. The old houses stand in irregular order; they are turned to quaint uses—schools of arms, societies, little day-schools for children, foreign table-d'hôtes, a 'supreme council' rules in a ground-floor parlour. Italian *courriers* congregate in the corner house, by which Zucchi used to pass on his way to the flagged hall. There are old shops for china and wooden carving in the adjoining streets. In one of the houses, M. R. tells me of a lawyer's office, where a painting by Miss Kauffmann still graces the panel of the chimney. Perhaps that may have been the house where Zucchi lodged, and the painting may have been her gift to the faithful friend. The faithful friend was made happy to-night by the sight of the happiness of the people he was interested in. They had a little impromptu feast in the studio. The lamp was lighted, the table was spread, old Kauffmann pro-

duced his cheese, and would have had Angelica's servants join them at supper, if she had not laughed the proposal off. Lord Henry happened to call in late, on his way to some card-party in Berkeley Square. He stared at the homely gathering, at the old man, at the child, half asleep, swinging her weary legs, with her head against Antonio's shoulder.

He tried to enter into his usual sentimental vein of talk with the mistress of the house, but she was naturally absorbed, and had no scruples in letting him see that he was in the way. He went off annoyed by his reception.

'That one there appears to have something wrong in the head,' said old John Joseph, in Italian, as Lord Henry walked away. 'I spoke to him three times and he did not answer, but examined me as if I were an ox. These English people seem stupid and dull of comprehension.'

'They are clever enough,' said Antonio with a sneer, 'and insolent enough at times to require a lesson.' His vexation woke up little sleepy Rosa. The child raised her head, and looked round the room with blinking eyes.

'You will love some of them, father, when you know them better—don't believe cross old Antonio,' said Angelica, 'nor let us think of anybody but ourselves to-night.' She rose from the table, and came round to where Antonio was sitting.

'Look at this child, she is half asleep,' said Antonio, softening, as he usually did at Miss Angel's approach

'Give her to me, Antonio,' said Angel. 'Come, Rosa, I will put you into your little bed,' and then she opened her arms and little Rosa nestled into them with sleepy childish trust. The two men got up from the table, and followed Miss Angel into the adjoining room where Mariana had made up the little bed in a corner. Old Kauffmann began uncording Rosa's box, Angel sat down on the bedside smiling, with a happy grateful heart. Mr. Reynolds was far from her mind as little Rosa slept with her head hanging warm against her shoulder. The little thing woke up when Miss Angel undressed her, but she was soon dreaming again, unconscious of the strange new world into which she had come from her green home in the valley.

That was tranquil happiness; and all the next days were happy, and seemed as if they were old days come back. Antonio spent most of them in Golden Square; he was going away soon, he said, and returning to his work near Windsor. He had many messages for Angelica from his friends there, from Dr. Starr and his seven daughters.

'They say your room is always ready; and when you are sent for to the castle you are never to lodge anywhere but in their house,' said Antonio smiling.

'I cannot spare her yet,' said John Joseph, following his daughter with his proud eyes. 'But I am too tender a father to oppose her good prospects, and I shall know how to resign myself to a new separation when my child

is summoned to the sovereign Court. Then she shall stay with your friends. I will remain here. I feel sometimes, Antonio, as though I were a foolish old man, and out of place in these brilliant circles. That lord came again this morning with the Lady Ambassadress. Their manner was extraordinary, but I would not for worlds that Angelica should know it. They are her patrons, they must be humoured by us.'

One day Angelica coming home found her father looking very much delighted.

'A friend had been there,' said old Joseph, triumphant; 'one whose friendship might be worth much to them all —one who——'

'It is that man from Venice,' said Antonio, who was writing at the table. 'I do not see how any of us can profit by his coming. I do not like him. I do not understand his ways.'

'Count de Horn? *I* shall be very glad to see him,' said Miss Angel, laughing, and sitting down at her easel. 'Was he nice, father? Was he glad to see us established in our own house?'

'He is coming again,' said Zucchi. 'You will be able to ask him any questions you choose. Your father made him as welcome as if he had been a son of the house.'

'And does not my father make others welcome, too?' said Angelica, looking at him reproachfully.

Antonio shrugged his shoulders. 'John Joseph knows well enough who is useful to him,' he said.

When Count de Horn called again, as ill-luck would have it, Antonio was again there, and more than usually sarcastic. Angelica looked at him and shook her head to try and stop his rudeness to her guest, whom she was really glad to see. Antonio marched off in a rage.

M. de Horn seemed not to notice him, but went on praising picture after picture. He even suggested one, of which the subject was to be a Cupid, with the motto 'Garde à vous,' and Angelica actually executed this.

We hope the Count will purchase the study,' said old Kauffmann.

Antonio afterwards said he should not be surprised if he did; it was a most vulgar and commonplace composition.

Angelica nearly stamped with vexation. 'Nothing pleases you that I do.'

'Many things please me that you do, but you want me to compliment your vanity from morning till night,' said Zucchi, trembling with vexation, upsetting a table in his wrath, and making himself generally obnoxious.

Miss Angel's vanity was of a less excusable nature than good old John Joseph's reflected self-laudations. He became very pious about this time, and used to frequent the little Catholic chapel near Manchester Square, and return thanks to heaven for Angelica's success—for her

patrons those lords, for this valuable Count their friend—for her talents, for his own repose and happiness. He used to come back rather cross, and scold little Rosa, or the man-servant, or Angel if she came to meet him, or Antonio if he began to sermonise.

Antonio bore the old man's vexatious moods with admirable temper. He was charming to any one young and helpless, or to old and dependent people. To successful people, however, to his equals and superiors, Antonio was, it must be confessed, perfectly odious at times.

CHAPTER XX.

A COUNT.

De Horn was a mystery to other people besides Antonio. He was never entirely at his ease. He would stand, or sit, or talk, apparently without effort, but nothing seemed spontaneous. He never appeared quite to belong to the society in which he was, or even to care to do so. He used to have strange fits of abstraction, during which he seemed to lose the thread of what was going on. One day, instead of walking upstairs into Angelica's studio, he wandered down into the kitchens below, to the utter amazement of the man and the cook. On another occasion he clambered up to the hanging board of his own coach. He was very kind but capricious to his servants and dependants. Many tales were told of his valour and military skill. He had commanded a regiment in the French army. People said he was now engaged upon some secret diplomatic mission. He had come from Venice by way of Vienna and Paris, and was now established in

rooms in St. James's. He did not entertain, but his splendid equipage and liveries gave him notoriety, and his good looks and elaborate courtesy made him popular, especially with women; men were a little cold to him. He had fought a duel or two; he played cards as everybody else did, but he never drank any wine. His riding was unrivalled, and it was really a fine sight to see him mounted on one of Lord W.'s spirited chargers, and galloping round and round the stable-yard. His dancing was also said to be unequalled. He had already engaged Miss Angel for a couple of sets at Lady W.'s great ball, to which everyone was looking forward.

De Horn was a tall and distinguished-looking man, with a thoughtful countenance. His keen eyes seemed to scan the unspoken minds of those with whom he came in contact. It was true that he knew something of the world; he could read men and women to a certain point, measure their shortcomings and their vanities with a curious quickness of apprehension, but that was all. Their is a wider science of human nature, of which scarcely the first lessons had reached him. To understand people's good and generous qualities, to know their best and highest nature, we must be in some measure tuned to respond to them.

Nobody knew very much about De Horn, although everybody was talking about him. Angelica used to meet

him constantly. She was always glad to see him when she entered a room. Dr. Burney was giving his musical parties that autumn. Angelica used to go there, and De Horn rarely missed one, although he seemed not to care for literary society as a rule, and used to glance with an odd expression at the tea-table and the six-weeks-old dish of baked pears which the company systematically rejected. The pears might be indifferent, but the company was of the best, and Dr. Burney, with his sword and court-dress, would come in from the Duke of Cumberland's, bringing a flavour of highest social refinement.

De Horn sometimes spoke of life in Sweden, of his home at Hafvudsta, with a certain well-bred reserve. Angelica was much interested by the few words he let drop one day concerning his picture galleries.

'Had he pictures? What pictures?' asked Angelica.

'I trust before long that I may be able to answer your question by pointing to some now in your own studio, madam,' he said, with the slow foreign accent. 'What charm can those of the old men have for us compared to that which your work must ever exercise?'

This was the style of conversation that Angelica did not object to, though common sense made her reply: 'I can imagine that a friend's work may have its own interest; but the old men, as you call them, Count,' said Miss Angel, coquettishly, 'have their own wonderful gifts,

which we cannot hope to follow or repeat. What pictures have you? Are they of the Italian school?

'Yes, yes,' said the Count, absently. 'Your Hobbema painted a very fine portrait of my father——'

Angelica looked puzzled. The Count suddenly began to laugh, and said, 'Forgive my distractions, madam, since you are the cause of them. What were we talking about?'

'*We* are talking about Dr. Johnson, Count,' said one of the ladies present, who did not wish Angelica to monopolise their lion. 'He is expected here presently. Have you ever met him?'

'An old man—something like this,' said the Count taking a few steps and changing his face. It was a curiously effective piece of mimicry, and the result was so striking that everybody exclaimed, and began to entreat De Horn to perform some other characters. Angelica was scarcely pleased when he suddenly looked at his watch and darted across the room in imitation of Lord W.'s peculiar manner.

'No, no, no! Lord W. is the kindest man, the best of creatures,' she cried. 'I cannot bear to see him imitated.'

'And yet you yourself have painted his portrait,' said De Horn, reproachfully, immediately returning to her side. His looks seemed to say 'I only did it to please you. I hate the whole thing.' In vain they all begged for further specimens of his power He took leave at the

first pause in the conversation. Miss Reynolds came and sat down in the place he had left vacant. 'What an actor that man is!' the little lady said; 'I wonder whether good judges would agree with me. And yet, oddly enough, it seemed to me for the first time that he was *not* acting to-night when he performed those characters. Where is your father? why have you not brought him?'

'My father is at home,' said Miss Angel; 'he will not come out.'

Happy as he was, and proud of Angelica and of her brilliant success, and delighted as he might be by the accounts of her popularity, old Kauffmann felt very forlorn sometimes in the strange London world into which he had penetrated, and as if Angelica was no longer the same little Angel he had been accustomed to. At first he tried to conceal this feeling; but very soon his depression became too evident for Angel not to guess with her quick wits that something was amiss. The old man spent much of his time in the studio, received their visitors with the old well-known formula, but, alas, even his trump cards, the Cardinal and the Bishop of Como, seem to have lost their potency.

Angelica used to find it difficult to impress English customs upon old John Joseph, whose familiarity and obsequiousness were sometimes a little trying to her

friends. She was not one of those who dwell upon the faults of the people they love, but it was impossible to be blind to the small social difficulties that arose from time to time.

People stared at the old fellow, as Lord Henry had done, some ignored him, some turned away; Lady W. was barely civil to him when she came, and if they had not had that one quarrel already, Angelica would have spoken to her on the subject. But, as it was, she dared risk no more scenes, for she did not feel in herself the strength to withstand unkind words and feelings from the person to whom she owed so much. Miss Reynolds, who had persisted in her visits, was the one person willing to listen while old Kauffmann recounted the present and past glories of Angelica's career. Alas! none were to compare to these present honours, and yet were they happier now than in the old wandering days when they knew not from hour to hour what would befall them? But people strive for something apart from happiness, and must not complain if success does not always bring those consolations which belong to less prosperous times.

Old Kauffmann felt the want of definite occupation, which is almost a necessity in life, when sunshine (that best of occupations) fails. He visited the sights of London most diligently. Little Rosa of the dark eyes was his companion in his walks; with her he went to call upon

Zucchi in his lodging in Soho. Sometimes Zucchi would leave his work to come out with them, and be their guide about the town. There were some sights as well unseen. One day they met two carts with seven men going to be hanged at Tyburn.

When they got back to Golden Square they found Angelica quietly painting in her sunny studio; she was smiling and dressed in white. Flowers stood on the table; De Horn was there watching Angelica's brush as it travelled on. The only cloud to be seen was on Antonio's face, when he entered and noted their look of intimacy and ease. 'It is a master-piece,' the Count was saying. De Horn had natural cleverness, but no real feeling whatever for art. He praised Angelica's work because it suited him to do so, and when he stood absorbed before her easel and exclaimed, 'Good heavens, what genius!' he scarcely looked at the picture but at the blushing painter.

'There is a man of worth,' old John Joseph said, rubbing his hands, after the Count's departure. 'My Angel, has he given you an order? Have you asked him the full price? Remember to ask a good price from those who can pay, to whom gold is nothing.'

'I cannot agree with you there,' Antonio cried, exasperated, he scarce knew why. 'A picture is worth its own value. I cannot endure that your daughter should sell her dignity with her work, and change her price according to the bidder.'

Old John Joseph was getting very impatient of Antonio's expostulations.

'Ché, ché, ché!' he said, angrily; 'keep thy hand in thy empty pocket if it pleases thee, Antonio. Thou comest with thy croak, croak, like a bird of ill omen. Go, my Angel; trouble not thyself. She looks quite pale and worn, and it is all thy doing, Antonio; thou art robbing her of her beauty and freshness.'

And, sure enough, Angel suddenly began to cry.

'Yes,' she said; 'you wound me, you pain me; you say we are bad people, that my work is worthless, that I make money by false pretence, by defrauding other people—you, Antonio, to whom we have always tried to show kindness and affection. Why do you do it? Why do you mistrust old friends, and give us nothing but pain by your coming?'

Her irritation was caused, had Antonio but known it, by very different things, but, as people do, she vented it upon Antonio, patient and silent enough now, and cut to the heart by her fierce attack. If he had but known it, never did she feel more trust in him, never more secret longing for his help and wish for his approval, than as she stood there angry, reproachful, with angry looks and white quivering lips. De Horn's attentions had brought back the impression of Mr. Reynolds's cruel behaviour. She was to meet him that evening at Lady W.'s ball. De Horn was also to be there. Her

heart was heavy with irritated foreboding. She childishly poured the suppressed irritation of the moment upon poor Antonio. The clouds had been gathering; the storm now broke.

'Is this the way you venture to speak to me?' cried Antonio, also in the wrong, also angry. 'You two, who owe me a thousand benefits! Not of money, perhaps—that has not been mine to give—but is care nothing? Are anxious thought and fatigue and weariness in your service nothing? And now you, John Joseph, reproach me with my empty pocket, and forget all the past. You, Angelica, say that all my long fidelity and truth-speaking have given you nothing but pain. You shall be spared that pain in future. I leave you to your own infatuated vanity, to your worldly associates. Do you think I am blind? Do you think I do not see what is passing before my eyes, the baits thrown out to riches, to rank, to all unworthy objects? I don't know how much I have loved you, Angelica. Henceforth I leave you, and shall turn my thoughts away from your life and your interests. If you are sorry some day, that old fox John Joseph can come and tell me so.'

And exit Antonio, without once looking back.

'Oh, father!' cried Angel, falling back into a chair, and covering her eyes.

'Tch, tch!' said old John Joseph; 'it is nothing, nothing, I tell you. He is insupportable with his jealousy.

He will come back soon enough, on all fours, to ask our pardon. Insolent calumniator! Old fox—did you hear, Angel, what he called me?'

This happened on the very afternoon of the day when Lady W.'s great ball was to be given. Angel, who had been looking forward to it with childish eagerness, now suddenly seemed to turn indifferent—to hate the very notion of dancing with a heavy heart. When the moment came she reluctantly followed little Rosa, who had run in to remind her that it was time to get ready. The scene with Zucchi had troubled Angelica greatly. She felt that he had been in earnest, and that he was really gone, whatever her father may say.

'Cousin Angel, are you not longing to look at your dress?' said little Rosa. 'Grandpapa and I have put it out upon the bed for you for a surprise. Come, come;' and she took one of the listless hands and tried to drag her up from her seat.

It was even a greater event to little Rosa that Angelica should go to the great ball than to Angelica herself. 'Will there be anybody so grand as you?' said the little thing, looking delightedly at the dress that was spread out upon the bed.

Angelica's bedroom was a great dark room, with a red paper and one or two dark old-fashioned pieces of furniture which had been left by the last inhabitant, a melancholy old bachelor who had died there. One door

opened into the studio, through which little Rosa now came again, carefully carrying the tall lamp which the woman-servant had just brought up. Upon the bed lay the beautiful white brocade ready to put on, with white satin shoes pointing their toes, and the fan already prepared to flaunt. Angelica had painted it herself with her favourite theme from Poussin, of shepherds and pipes and mausoleums. How Miss Angel had enjoyed making her preparations, and now——

'You are not looking,' said the little girl. To please her the young painter bent over the dress. A tear fell on the sleeve of the silver brocade, making a little stain.

'Oh, cousin!' said little Rosa, horror-striken.

'A brocade trimmed with pearls and tears, child—that is a new fashion,' said Angelica, smiling sadly, and then she sat down listlessly by the side of the bed. She was a little stunned somehow, and scarcely could have told you what had happened or why her tears were falling. After a few minutes she roused herself and began to get ready with the help of her kind little tire-woman. She felt so strangely; it seemed to her as if she had received a dull blow, and the effects were still upon her. Listless, ashamed, provoked, indignant, she had never looked less handsome than to-night. She talked on to little tiptoe Rosa; she patiently turned and twirled before old John Joseph's admiring eyes; he held the Roman lamp on high to see her more plainly. Her

dress of white brocade was a present from Lord Essex, who had brought the stuff with such evident pleasure and kindness that Angelica had not known how to refuse the gift, and she had had it made up for the great occasion.

It would have been more becoming to her than the celebrated rosebud dress, had she been in equal spirits; white is the natural colour for all young women, that in which they look their best, but Angelica's best to-night was a sad and absent best. . . .

Lady Diana had good-naturedly sent her own carriage and man-servant to fetch her friend and the brocade.

'Heaven bless thee, my child!' said John Joseph, with great solemnity, when the carriage was announced. 'Be good and happy, and continue to recompense your old father for all his long sacrifices. They seem to him as nothing when you are honoured and esteemed according to your merit.' And then she drove off in the dark, and a page was turned over for ever in her life.

CHAPTER XXI.

'MUSICIANS WAITING; ENTER SERVANTS.'

Lady W. had not spared thought and trouble to make her ball go off with all brilliancy of wax and fire, of minuet and country dance, of beauty dressed to best advantage, and music playing in time to dignified graces; servants without number were standing about the doors displaying their masters' gold-braided ambitions and bright-coloured liveries. De Horn's green lacqueys were conspicuous among them; they carried wands in their hands and wore huge nosegays. The park was lighted by torches, lamps were hanging along the avenues that led to the house. A crowd stood outside the iron gates, cheering occasionally as the long names and the splendours and persons belonging to each came driving up. I think people were less *blasé* then than they are now, and thought more seriously upon certain subjects. Dancing, for instance, and powdering, and postures took up a great deal of time; so did conversation and correspondence—of all of which exercises our own generation seems some-

what impatient, as it hurries on its way curtailing with small ceremony.

Miss Angel started in her grand equipage to take her part in all the state ceremonies, and her father put on his old cloak and prepared to follow into the crowd to have the glory of seeing his child pass into the paradise of lords. The Princess of Brunswick was to be there and other great personages. Little Rosa begged so hard to be allowed to go too, that as it was a fine November night shining with many stars and crossed by no chill winds, the old man consented to it, and the little girl started clinging to his hand and dancing with delight along the pavement. I suppose to one or two people present or in the crowd, within or without, every ball is delightful; certainly little Rosa in her outer darkness was as happy as any of the splendid and lighted-up ladies within—far happier than Angel herself, who had come in a strange and depressed state of mind.

By degrees (it often happens after depression) her spirits rose wildly. If a new gown, plenty of music, smooth polished floors, admiration, and half-a-dozen persons at her elbow, could make her happy, these elements were not wanting. Antonio was gone, Mr. Reynolds had left her, but all these vanities remained. People talk of fleeting worldliness; it seemed to be the one thing that she could count upon. Friendship left

her in a fury; love made a speech and walked out of the room; but here was faithful vanity, and amenities unchanging; here were partners and compliments, here was De Horn unremitting in courteous attention. Since other things were not for her, she would take what she could hold. Was Frivolity a divine goddess after all? was this to be the experience of her life, to find divinity in one thing after another? At times during that eventful evening Miss Angel's laughter and spirits were almost wild, but at others she drooped. There was anxiety in the air; the secret feelings of the last few months seemed mingling with the scene before her. Almost the first person she saw as she came into the room was Mr. Reynolds talking to one of the beautiful Ladies Waldegrave. He came up to her, held out his hand with a gentle deprecating look. She hardly knew how to respond; there was a dazzle of lights before her eyes, of music in her ears. She turned away quickly, and just realised the fact that Lady Diana, in crimson, and looking greatly bored, was beckoning to her to come and stand by her side.

From their corner the two ladies could see into the great dining-room, which had been decorated and turned into a dancing-hall. An arch had been opened into the little octagon room, Miss Angel's late retreat.

Her bedroom had been transformed into a retiring

boudoir, with lamps and low divans; almost all the windows were unshuttered, and the lights on the terrace without seemed to make a fiery circle, and the shouts of the bystanders an outer incantation to the glittering magic within. There is a picture by Stothard of a court ball in those days, delicately and charmingly indicated. We feel a sweeping and measured calm in all the brilliance, a high-bred grace and composure. Lady W.'s ball was remarkable for this mixture of brightness and grave restraining sense of high dignity present.

The country dances were performed with great spirit. Angelica danced twice with M. de Horn, who came and reminded her that she was promised to him as she stood by Lady Di. De Horn's dancing was celebrated for its excellence. He was stately, composed, graceful, moving his long limbs with a sort of careless ease. When dancing, he seemed quite different from the somewhat conscious person he appeared under ordinary circumstances. His ear for music must have been remarkable; and the whole glittering set of country-dancers seemed to be inspirited and kept to the measure by this one man's performance. They swayed and bowed, and stamped their high heels; the swords swung, the gentlemen's gold embroideries, which they shared with their lacqueys, twinkled; the stately lady figures rose and sank, and pointed their satin toes. De Horn among them all, in his black and silver,

seemed to beat his own time and to keep the music itself in measure. Angelica made no secret of her pleasure in his performance. When excellence reaches a certain point, even dancing becomes a fine art, and ceases to be a personal display. De Horn's glance sought Angelica's after one of their complicated evolutions, and she gave a bright and unqualified look of approval and interest.

Mr. Reynolds was still standing not far off, and he saw her glance, and then he looked down at his shoe-buckles, feeling as if he had no right to watch Angelica's expressions or movements any more. That look seemed to tell him he had been right; to absolve his conscience. She was a ghost to him—that beautiful living woman, with the light of youth in her eyes, of interest and fine intelligence. Mr. Reynolds was gone when De Horn conducted her back to her place by Lady Di. The Count remained by her side, not talking exactly, for he was a *personnage muet*, and depended more upon his legs than his wits for the favour he received from the world. He stood listening to Angelica's talk with everybody else, and putting in a word every now and then more or less to the purpose.

'What a stupid man De Horn is!' said Lady Di once, when he had moved away, called off by some acquaintance. 'I cannot imagine him the hero I am assured he is. They say he fought with wonderful courage at Hastenbeck a year ago. He does not look warlike now.'

'Do you not think so?' said the Kauffmann. 'I think the man is a very good specimen of a human being.'

Was it magnetism and force of will by which De Horn made his way? It was some curious power he had of making others half interested in him, half afraid of him. Angelica dimly felt that she was in danger. He still seemed with her, even when she was talking to others. Goethe tells Eckermann about attractive and repulsive powers belonging to human beings as they walk in mysteries. It must have been some magnetic powers in De Horn which imposed upon so many.

As the handsome couple stood side by side they commanded a view of the brilliant company in the hall and on the blazing staircase, drawn up to receive the Princess of Brunswick and the Duke of Cumberland, who had arrived in State. The heads bend in long line, the curtseys vie in depth and sweep: the procession sweeps on, the buzz of voices rises afresh. The Princess is discussed, the latest gossip, every imaginable topic.

Two people begin talking in the crowd of the 'Daily Courant,' a newspaper which has just come out.

'Its news is not of the latest,' says one of the speakers, turning to De Horn; 'it announces Count De Horn's expected arrival in London *viâ* Paris and Dover.' It is three months after date in its intelligence.

'Is he coming?' said De Horn, with a start.

'He—who?' said the other, and De Horn seemed suddenly, to remember to burst out laughing.

Angelica preoccupied as she was, could not help wondering at the agitation this little incident seemed to produce in her partner. He presently asked her if she did not feel the heat. Would she not come nearer an open window?

'Are you ill? Pray do not think of me,' she said, for she saw that he was deadly pale. But he would not leave her. He seemed to detain her, by mere force of will to keep her apart from the rest of the company.

He began talking as he had never done before. 'Ah! that you were in my own rank of life!' he said once; 'but what matters rank or difficulty where there is wit and courage and true love?'

She became more and more uneasy, as his manner grew more free. He followed her everywhere from room to room, into the supper-room at last, where he handed some refreshment she had asked for across a table, saying, 'Let me serve you, madam. Ah! you are fortunate; here in this country you have no vexing restrictions, as with us. Before I left Sweden, a friend of mine was summoned before the magistrates for having taken a cup of chocolate in her box at the play. She was condemned to a week's imprisonment and a heavy fine.'

'Is it possible?' cried Angelica. 'I should be sorry

to pay such a price for a cup of chocolate.' (Alas! poor woman, she had to pay a heavier price than this for that which Count de Horn was now handing to her.)

'Our laws are of extraordinary severity,' cried the Count. 'I myself have, I fear——' he broke off abruptly. 'Will you come back to the dancing-room?' he said, and he looked at her with one of those strange uncertain glances.

As De Horn's agitation grew, Angelica felt her own insensibly increase. She became more and more afraid, and once when he had been called away by one of the Princess of Brunswick's attendant pages, she precipitately engaged herself to Lord W., who happened to be standing near.

But fate seemed to interfere. Lady W. came up with a 'No, W., you must *not* dance with Kauffmann. I know how much you would like to do so; but there is the Princess of Brunswick waiting to be taken in to supper. Here is Count de Horn, who will, I am sure, supply your place.'

She was gone, and once more Angelica found her fingers in the grasp of the very hand she was trying to avoid. His fingers held hers so strangely, closing with a firm light pressure, that she seemed unable to resist. 'Here is a seat by the window,' she said, trying to avoid him, and with a sort of smile she withdrew her hand in an unconcerned way, talking of something else all the while; but again, when she happened to meet the look of his strange

penetrating eyes, it seemed to her as if his glance held her as firmly as his closing fingers.

Old John Joseph was in the crowd outside, and had managed to creep with little Rosa through the barriers. The windows were unshuttered, the room brightly lighted, As the old man and the child stood without on the terrace of the garden, they saw, to their delight, Angelica go by in her brilliance, escorted by her magnificent squire.

'How white she looks, grandpapa!' said little Rosa; 'is she frightened all alone?'

'She is not all alone; that great Signor is talking to her,' said John Joseph. 'Praised be Heaven, that I see my child honoured as she deserves; all are acknowledging her rights. See, Rosa, they are looking for her, she receives a message, she is led across. Rosa! it is one of the Princess's pages that has been sent for her,' cried old John Joseph, clasping his hands and creeping up closer and closer to the window and trampling the flower-bed to behold the apotheosis of his Angel as she was conducted to the great chair where the Princess was sitting in state.

'People are coming this way. Come quick,' whispers little Rosa, pulling at his coat-tails. They are a timid pair, and the burst of voices frightens them, and they creep off carefully, and unperceived, slide along the rails and come out away into the street.

They find their way home, through dark moonlit streets to the house where the tired servants are sleeping.

Soon little Rosa, too, is asleep and dreaming of moonlight and of music.

Old John Joseph lights his pipe and sits down contentedly in the great chair in the parlour, waiting until Angel should return; he opens the window to hear her first summons.

Long, dark hours pass, and he nods sleepily in his place, all wrapped in his cloak. The open window lets in the first light of dawn, the birds begin to chirp crisply in the chill serenity, the silver light just touches upon his grey hair and falling head.

The dawning light shines also upon the ball, and upon the dancers still untiringly pursuing their mazes. It shines upon a woman who has come out from the hot glaring room, with the straining music and oppressive scent of burning wax, into a dim grey garden where the trees just rustle in the early morning, and the sparrows are whistling their early chorus with fresh precision.

All that night Angelica had felt unnaturally wound up, excited, agitated. This pale cool light seemed to call her back to rest, to tranquil mind, to reality of heart and feeling. Her dress gleamed white among the shadows. A silver cloud was drifting overhead.

Some one saw her go from the room, and came pursuing her steps. It seemed impossible to avoid De Horn, who now followed her along the path. She turned to

meet him at last and faced him with her weary looks. 'Why do you come?' she cried, exasperated; 'do not you see that I would avoid you?'

'Why do I come?' said De Horn, 'Madam, I have much to say to you. My happiness, my liberty, my life are in your hands. I have had news to-night—news that overwhelms me. I am in dire disgrace. My estates and my life may be forfeit. You alone can save me, save me from despair.'

Angelica turned her wondering eyes. She saw he was in earnest; he looked ghastly.

'The Queen would listen to *you*,' he continued eagerly. 'Did you not see the Princess smile as she gave you her Majesty's message and summons to Windsor? *Your* influence would save me,' he repeated.

'Indeed I would do anything,' faltered Angelica greatly moved; 'but you overrate my influence, you entirely mistake . . .'

'I do not overrate anything,' he said, approaching his anxious face to hers, and through the twilight his great black eyes gleamed, and, as the light increased, she saw more plainly the lines of care and of terror in his face. Then, before she could prevent him, he fell upon his knees and caught hold of her skirts with his two hands as he spoke.

'You have influence upon all whom you approach; you could obtain grace for your husband,' he cried, 'if not for me. Oh, Angel, be that which you are, a generous and

noble-hearted woman. Give me my life! I love you to distraction; you see it, you know it. If you have one womanly feeling, one pitiful thought for a wretch in torment, you could save me, you alone.' And he struck his breast.

'Oh! no, no,' said Angel, doubting, not knowing how to answer, how to escape.

He went on passionately entreating, and she, bewildered, excited, let him go on, listened with rising agitation, melted as she listened, grew interested against her own conviction, and suddenly, the spell of the moment, the passionate petition, her own yielding nature, all overcame her: some wave seemed to flow over her head, and it seemed to her as if it was no new thing; but as if that voice had been pleading and pleading from the very beginning of life, as if all her coldness and indifference were cruelty and selfishness, and as if some conviction had come to her, that he *must* be saved at any price, she alone must save him.

Suddenly, very suddenly, very quietly, she yielded, agreed to everything, to anything he asked. If he really loved her she said she would marry him. She would meet him next day at the little Catholic chapel out of Manchester Square. He could hardly believe it as she spoke, hardly believe that his prize was so easily won. She would keep the secret, and as she promised this he seized her hand and kissed it again and again. 'Oh, you could not deceive me!' he cried.

If any one were to suspect his marriage—such were the laws of Sweden, De Horn assured her—he would be immediately carried off, imprisoned perhaps for life; 'but you, my treasure, my Angel of deliverance, under the shadow of your pure wings I shall be safe.' He seemed almost overpowered, and for a moment Angelica lost courage.

But she made no opposition, when De Horn seized her hand, and pulled Lady W.'s little ring off her finger.

'This is a pledge of your truth and goodness; you dare not fail me now.' Though his words were harsh, his looks were melting; they seemed to appeal to her very heart. She could not speak, but bent her head in assent. When she looked up De Horn was hastily escaping along a shadowy path; for one instant he stopped, waved farewell, and pointed towards the house, from whence a whole stream of dancers now issued.

The sun rose over the houses, a glittering stream of gold fell upon Angelica in her silver dress. As she turned to meet the company, she seemed on fire, advancing radiant and excited. How much are omens worth?

Poor Angel! hitherto people had reproached her with lightness of nature. Henceforward the burden of life lay heavy enough to satisfy her most envious detractors.

CHAPTER XXII.

'I MIGHT FORGET MY WEAKER LOT.'

ANGELICA had little knowledge of character. She was too much absorbed in her own impressions to receive very definite images of the minds of the people she lived among. She could scarcely understand how events appeared to them. For some hours she lay still upon her bed, living over and over again the strange experiences that had come to her. It seemed to her as if she alone were concerned in all. Then at last she fell into a deep sleep, from which all emotion, all fear, all regret had passed away. She only awakened to hear her father's voice softly calling her from the room outside.

'Angelica, Angelica, my child!'

'Yes, father,' answered Angel with a sigh, awakening.

The door was locked, and she did not unclose it.

'I hear that Zucchi is in town, preparing for a journey to Italy,' said old Kauffmann through the chink.

'His father is dead; will you come with me, Angelica, and bid farewell to that misguided young man?'

'I am tired, father,' said Angelica; 'cannot he come and see us as usual?'

'I have been at his lodgings,' continued old Kauffmann mysteriously. 'I cannot persuade him to come, Angelica. You my child, have more influence than I over that hog-headed youth. Haste! haste! dress thyself, and come with thy old father. I want to hear of last night. What did they say to thee? they did not ask after thy old father, Angelica?'

'I cannot go out; I am busy this morning,' said Angel from within: she had now risen and was coming and going about the room.

She was determined not to be absent that morning; De Horn might come, a message might come. What was this strange new state of mind in which she did not dare to face her father. She found that she dreaded meeting him. The thought of seeing Antonio, also, frightened her: she felt as if he would read her very heart in one glance.

Old Kauffmann was surprised that his daughter should venture to be obstinate. His temper had been ruffled by Zucchi's reception. He had already visited the young man that morning, and found him busy packing, winding up his affairs, seeing to many details. Old Kauffmann's reproachful reconciliation rather bored

him than otherwise. Zucchi was pre-occupied, depressed by his father's death, hurrying to his brothers and sisters. John Joseph, with his martyr-like airs, vexed him. His moral aphorisms about resignation, his long descriptions of his own household prosperity and elevation, were not calculated to put Antonio into better spirits. Old Kauffmann perceiving that something was seriously amiss, had determined that Angelica must come herself to the rescue. But Angelica is also obstinate, will not open, and calls out from time to time, 'I am coming, father. Dear father, do not knock so loud. Let me dress in peace.'

'Do I disturb your peace? Is this the way you speak to your father?' shouts the old fellow, more and more irate and vexed by every moment's delay. 'After my years of care, of self-denial, after the education I have bestowed upon you, with efforts scarcely to be told,' he says, raising his voice, for he hears footsteps approaching, and is glad of an audience to his wrongs—'is this the way to treat your father, whose long sacrifices came to the very notice of the Lord Cardinal. Ungrateful child, where is your obedience? why do you refuse to accompany me on this visit of reconciliation and farewell?'

Then he looked round to see who had come in, and what the effect of his eloquence had been upon the visitor; was it Antonio after all? Antonio at that moment was far away in spirit. Could Angelica have seen his heart

as it was then it might have added a pang to the moment. How bitterly did he reproach himself afterwards for his indifference and failure at this critical time. Some phase had come over him. Weariness of waiting, a conviction of the hoplessness of his dreams; vivid personal preoccupations, had arisen for the first time, to separate him from Angelica's interests. It was not Antonio but De Horn who walked in upon Kauffmann's recriminations. He found the old man with his long blue coat-tails flying, and his nose against Angelica's panel.

'Ungrateful child!' the father shouts with renewed eloquence. 'What an example for thy little innocent Cousin Rosa, my dead brother's only daughter—a legacy to our tenderness,' and then Angelica from within hears a second voice and a change of tone in old John Joseph. Her heart beats faster than ever. It is De Horn already come. Come—for what? Her trembling fingers tangle the strings. She can hardly fasten her dress, pin on the great flapping cap, beneath which her eyes shine so brightly; tie the band round her waist: somehow or other she is ready at last, she flings open her window for a breath of air, and then with shaking hands unlocks her door and comes forth. The studio is all full of sunshine, It is late in the morning and the sun is high.

De Horn bows low as she appears. He is standing in the window with her father

Old Kauffmann had been for the last few minutes

escorting the Count from portfolio to portfolio, exhibiting Angelica's performances with a running commentary of his own, diving into cupboards, and all the while secretly calculating the possible sum to which De Horn would go for orders. 'Here is your Excellency's own suggestion, *Garte à fous*' (so he pronounced it), 'rendered by my naughty inspired one. That one, possessed with such gifts of heaven, should prove rebellious to her father's expressed desire, is indeed a lesson to all.' Then seeing Angelica's worn looks, he cried, 'Thou art pale, my child. Why didst thou not tell me thou wert tired?' and old Kauffmann, with real tenderness, went hurrying up to her and took her listless hand.

''Tis nothing, father, only last night's excitement,' she answered.

Then she stood silent. She could not look at the Count, but turned her head away.

He advanced slowly and was silent for an instant.

'I came, madam, according to our appointment, to invite you to visit Mr. Townshend's gallery of sculpture,' said De Horn, at last, with a keen expressive glance, which made Angelica's cheeks blush crimson.

'Ah, now she is looking better,' said old Kauffmann, eagerly. 'Go, my child, go with his Excellency. Why didst thou not explain? . . . A walk will do thee good. I will return to that ingrate. Where is the sketch for her Majesty's portrait, Angelica. The Count is anxious

to see it. We think of representing the Queen as Venus awakening the sleeping arts of England. The idea seems to me worthy of our great Dante himself.'

Then he went on talking of the ball, of the Princess, of the brilliant scene of his Angel's triumph the night before; then he said he should delay no longer, but return at once to Zucchi at his lodging. 'It is better to forget the past; Antonio is a young man who owes almost everything to our protection; he has proved himself an ingrate, but that is no reason to give him up altogether,' said old Kauffmann. Angelica did not hear a word he said. She saw him put on his cloak, look about in the corner of the room for his stick, take his three-cornered hat and go off, calling to little Rosa who was at play down below. Angelica in her state of suppressed excitement and nervousness, was at once terrified to be alone with De Horn, and, longing for some further explanation, some greater certainty. She did not want to face what was before her. She tried to forget everything in the present The present was this unknown person, so familiar, already so mysterious. The present was her own studio, her own beating heart, her pictures in every corner, the dreams, and the allegories, and the fanciful bedizenments of the truth.

People are sometimes distraught and driven on by unaccountable impulses. These two people seemed possessed; it is impossible to say what was real, what was

mere illusion in their relation. 'I have brought you back your ring,' said the Count quickly; 'there is no time to be lost. I have made all arrangements. Will you come?' he repeated, and he took both her hands, and looked at her with his deep eyes.

'Do you remember the day we first met?' De Horn continued, gazing at her fixedly. 'Some strange pre sentiment drew me in your steps. I followed you in my gondola; I watched you as you passed from picture to picture in the Doge's Palace. Angelica, from the first moment I knew you, I had a presentiment how it would end; even when you left Venice, I knew I should see you again.'

Lady Diana had a presentiment too, I suppose,' said Angelica recovering a little and speaking with a gentle laugh.

De Horn turned white, then black. 'I was mad. I am in earnest now,' he said. Then eagerly, 'Don't delay, pray do not delay! The time is running short; the priest is waiting, you have promised; you, Angelica, are not of those who deceive.'

'I hope not,' said she, clasping her hands.

Angelica went stubbornly into her room, dressed herself, pulled on her silk hood, the broad frills fell over her face. Then she came out and returned to the studio, where De Horn was waiting gazing at her picture: he sprang forward with two long strides. 'Are you ready?'

he said. 'My good Angel! my preserver! my idol! So he called her. His love-making was somewhat to order, somewhat mechanical, so she afterwards felt. At the time she was in a state of such strange excitement that she did not very clearly know what he said. She only knew that this was some one who was grateful for her favours, some one in trouble whom she could serve; that by serving him she best served herself.

Here was a protector able and willing to help her. Henceforth she should have her own standing place in the world; no longer be tossed to and fro by variable tides, no longer be dependent upon the chance favours of fashion, of patrons, upon their humours and fancies. She should have some one to turn to whose right it would be to defend her, some one noble, generous, gentle, the prince of her wildest dreams. People might blame, let them blame; she had a *right*, as other women had, to be loved, to give happiness, and to receive it; who should dare interfere.

Little Rosa saw them as they started and came running up. 'Grandpapa did not take me with him. May I come with you, cousin?' she asked, taking Angel's hand.

Angelica held the little fingers tight in hers for an instant, and looked up at De Horn, who shook his head impatiently. 'Go back, child,' she answered, with a soft kiss; 'I shall not be long away from you.'

The child looked up wondering as the two walked away

along the sun-shining pavement, then they and their shadows crossed the angle of the square and disappeared behind the railings—the light drifting figure, the tall black man with his sword and his cocked-hat.

De Horn appeared impassive as usual, but secretly he was in a fume of impatience. They were not safe until they had reached the church. They walked quickly and in silence. Angelica scarcely knew how to speak to him; once she felt inclined to turn back: they were passing the house where Zucchi lodged, some scarce controllable impulse made her stop; but as she hesitated she looked in her companion's face, and that one glance showed her it was too late. He pulled her hand through his arm, and she felt that she was glad it was too late.

Everybody knows how strangely all the things that people have been, and felt, and loved, sometimes, almost from very vividness seem to lose their separate existence in our mind. The images grow confused, and we know what we fear and hope without realising why or how. Angelica was in some such state as she hurried on with De Horn.

The people along the street made way for them as they hastened past. No one seemed to notice them particularly; she saw the common story of every day—the fishwives shouting their wares, the coaches rolling, the windows opening and shutting; they also meet a ghastly procession on its way to Tyburn, with a crowd hurrying

along. De Horn turned pale, drew her closer to him and hurried away down a side street. They stopped at last at the low doorway in a passage out of Spanish Place. Afterwards Angelica remembered that a great carriage went by just then; as it passed she saw the harness glittering in the sun.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SIGN.

In supreme moments of life people notice many things unconnected with the circumstance that is impending. Angel ever after remembered the stupid little details of that morning's walk and the sight of glittering of harness in the sunshine would give her some odd feeling of mingled shame and regret, so did the swing of a curtain at times when it took a certain fold. De Horn held up the old curtain that swung before the chapel door, and she walked in with her hand upon his arm. It was a warm sunshiny morning, the streaks of dusty light reached to the altar, where a priest was standing with an open book, and two chorister boys in attendance. Now-a-days such a thing could not be, even then it was scarcely possible; but chance and opportunity had helped De Horn. He had met the priest, perhaps the only man in London who would have served his purpose, and his evil genius had not failed him yet.

And so Angel finds herself standing before the altar, looking at the darkened picture of Mary Mediatrix with the stabbed heart in flames. And the priest reads on, and the words of fate echo through the chapel, and the dream is dreamed out—a dream of blessing, a dream of prayer, a dream of peace never to be fulfilled. The whole thing seems so real, and is so baseless a fabric, a semblance only of what might have been so true for both these people. The prayers beat against the walls with chill echoes, the little choristers swing their incense; outside in the street the people are passing on their daily business. A woman seeing the door open came in and knelt in a quiet corner of the chapel; the Count started and looked round uneasily, hearing footsteps; then, reassured, he turned his dark eyes, not without some expression of feeling, upon the bent head by his side. And then the priest's voice ceases at last and the boys give a parting swing to their censers. It is over; the blessing is spoken in Latin, reluctantly enough and inefficaciously enough, to vindicate the power of all true benedictions.

'You have yet to sign,' said the priest hoarsely. He was an oldish man, and seemed ill and scarce able to stand. More than once his voice had faltered as he read the service. He came slowly down the steps of the altar and led the way to the vestry. There, after taking off his robe and slipping on his common daily vestment, he fetched a great book from a closet, and made them sign *Frederick*

De Horn—Angelica Kauffmann in the ruled place in the long column.

Angelica, incautious, incomplete, loving-hearted, went on acting in this dream as if it were all a reality, and looked up smiling with her eyes full of tears. 'You see I have done as you wished,' she said. And the stranger she had so imprudently trusted, forgetting for one instant that it was but a semblance of a shadow, broke out into some vehement and almost tender protestations of affection and unalterable fidelity.

Then he turned, still holding her hand, and whispered something to the priest and slipped some money into his palm. The priest seemed to demur, to ask for something more.

De Horn looked vexed. Angelica was still absorbed and not very observant.

'Have you a purse?' said De Horn to her; 'in my agitation I have forgotten mine.'

Angelica fumbled in her pocket and put her little purse with its hard earned guineas into his hand with a low laugh.

'I did not know it cost so much to get married,' she said gaily.

'This is an unusual marriage,' the priest replied, knitting his brows; 'the fees are very heavy, and there may be more to pay.'

Then arm-in-arm the new-married pair walked down

the aisle in silence; there was no triumph of music and friendship to escort them, but they heeded it not, and they came to the doorway where the curtain was swinging. Again De Horn lifted it, for his bride to pass under, and drew back into the shadow as he did so. She, with her radiant beaming face, stepped out without him into the sunshiny street, and at that moment by some strange chance a lady crossing the road followed by a footman came face to face with the new-made bride. Angelica stopped, turned white, then crimson.

'You! Angelica, I am in good luck to meet you,' cried Lady Diana, for it was she. 'What have you been confessing to your priest? Why do you look so amazed, child?'

'How did—how came you here?' faltered Angelica.

'I have a cousin living in Manchester Square. Lady W—— set me down just now, and the day was so fine that I determined to walk home,' said Diana, smiling. 'I did not expect to find such good company along the road.'

Lady Diana seemed to take it for granted that Angelica would walk back with her, and began to move onwards at an easy pace. Angelica lingered and looked round anxiously and bewildered. De Horn had not come out. Lady Diana remembered afterwards how strange her manner had been.

'Could you—could you wait here!' said Angelica. 'Don't—don't come in with me,' in great agitation, with a little cry. 'I will—my confessor.' She pushed against

the leather curtain and rushed into the chapel again, trembling lest Diana should follow. The place was quite empty, no one was praying or being married at the altar, all the lights were out. De Horn was not there. She crossed, calling him once or twice gently, and reached the door of the vestry where they had signed the papers a few minutes before. As she came along Angelica heard voices, those of De Horn and the priest who had married them. Were they angry? Surely she heard wrongly?

'If you dare,' said de Horn; but as she opened the door she found herself almost in his arms. 'Is she gone, my Angel?' he cried in a different tone.

'Lady Diana is waiting; shall I tell her? oh, may I tell her all?' said Angelica imploringly.

'Not now, not now,' he answered emphatically. 'Good heaven! do you know that my very life may be forfeited if you do not keep my secret?' Then he gently put her away. 'Go back now,' he said; 'go with her, it will prevent suspicion. I will make my arrangements; leave all to me. I shall follow you to Windsor. As soon as it is safe for me to speak, the whole world shall be aware of my happiness. Go now, Angel of my life. She might suspect if you delay,' he said in great agitation, as he led her gently towards the door; and somehow Angel found herself alone, quite alone in the dim chapel once more, with a strange sinking of heart. She heard Lady Di's straggling footsteps coming in search of her.

'Is he gone?' said Lady Di, slipping her hand into her friend's arm.

'He, who?' faltered Angelica. 'What do you mean?'

'Did you not tell me that you were looking for your confessor?' said the other lady. 'Ah! child, I fear that for some people there are many things to confess after a ball,' and she smiled and then sighed a little sadly. Then, as they came away, she went on talking more seriously, saying that for her part she was glad to have been born a Protestant in a Protestant country. 'I could not endure,' she said, 'to feel myself in the bondage of another person's will; perhaps that is why I have remained protesting,' she said, 'neglected, but free.'

Angelica scarcely listened as Lady Di talked on; it was with difficulty she could bring herself to answer. No wonder that she was absorbed in her own affairs. She had thrown herself into her part, with all her fervour of nature; this strange future did not frighten her, although her heart beat with some vague alarm. Should she be able to do her duty by her husband? She was not afraid, nor did she fear for her father. Surely, surely, she should be able to make his happiness still. Was it not her special gift to make those happy whom she loved? Where had Lady Diana wandered in her talk? . . .

'Dear Angelica,' she was saying, 'you must forgive me now if I say something to you which has often been upon my lips. There *is* one person who frightens me

for you—one person who haunts your steps. I could not help noticing his manner the night of our ball. There is something about that man—something false, believe me. I would not trust him with any one or any thing I prized.'

'How suspicious people are,' cried Angelica, firing up passionately; 'how uncharitable in their judgments. What has Count de Horn done to you or me but kindness? How, how can you speak so cruelly?' All her pent-up agitation broke into tears of excitement. Lady Diana was not a little indignant with her for her childishness.

'You are perfectly absurd,' said that plain-spoken lady. 'I have little patience, as you know, with affectation. What is Count de Horn to you or to me, that we should quarrel about him?' They had reached the door of Angelica's own house by this time. Wearied out and over-excited, the poor bride pulled the bell, and, when her servant came, rushed in without a word, without bidding her friend farewell, brushing past her father on the stair, and once more ran into her own room and locked herself in, in a passion of tears and excitement.

But this storm did not last long. In an hour she had recovered, and came out and joined her two companions. She might be silent to them of what had passed, but she would condescend to no small deceptions, so she determined. Yes, she had been crying. 'Never mind,

father,' she repeated, clinging to him for an instant; 'it is no real trouble affects me. I know not,' she added, 'whether it is happiness or sorrow.' She said this with the old familiar action, and holding his arm. She had never been sweeter than at that moment.

Her grace, her tranquility, her gentle bright emotion, unconsciously reassured him. Little Rosa caught some hidden gaiety from her cousin's manner. 'How pretty you look, cousin Angel, in your white dress,' said the child, 'but the winter is come, you will not be able to wear it any more.'

'Antonio is gone,' said the old man. 'I saw him start. Antonio's doings are mad enough to frighten his friends. He has given up the chief part of his inheritance to his sister, he tells me. I think he does it on purpose to make me angry.'

Whatever poor Angelica may have shown of feeling that day, it is certain that her bridegroom never lost his composure. He came again that afternoon, actually called as usual, and finding some company present remained talking as if nothing had happened, and to Angelica's dismay went away without a look or a sign, leaving Lord Henry discoursing upon the beauty of waxwork and its superiority to marble. Rossi describes De Horn's perfect calm through all this deception. This man's interested feeling was so mixed up and complicated with real respect and admiration that it would have required a far more

suspicious person than my poor heroine to distinguish the false from the true, in all that had happened. De Horn's part with her was not all acted, that was the difficulty. Others found him out, because with them he was but a performer, with her he was as sincere as it was possible for a man of his nature to be.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PLEIADES.

The weather broke suddenly after this last sunshiny November day. Angelica could not go out. The wind tossed the clouds, and heaped dull palls over Golden Square. The light scarce sufficed to the painter's work. John Joseph, too, seemed ailing, and required all her spare time. A week went by utterly uneventful and silent. As Angelica nursed her father and tended him, everything that had happened seemed almost to pass from her mind. It was not, could not be true, she sometimes thought, as the days went by, while she sat painting at her easel. She was not doing her best work at this time. How was it possible, for she was listening to every step, starting at every post?

One stormy day Mariana brought in a letter which had been left at the door.

It was blotted with ink and with rain, and oddly spelt. Angelica herself wrote a pretty and delicately lined handwriting, and she was a little disappointed by the look of this clumsy manuscript.

'Patience, my idol,' it said. 'The time is not yet come. You will be summoned to the Queen in a day or two. This I have on good authority. Then will be the moment to disclose our marriage. I shall join you at Windsor.

'Yours till death,
'De Horn.'

This was all—a mere scrap to exist upon; but Angelica was of a bright and hopeful disposition. She thought well of life on the whole, and though all was uncertain, and the skies clouded, and the winds rose, and though winter had suddenly broke in upon her warm sunshine and tranquillity, she hoped on, and wove her fancy pieces, and secretly enjoyed her dignities. A countess! What would old John Joseph say when she told him? He would surely, surely forgive the deception. One day she could not help asking him if he should like her to marry a high Court gentleman, and live among the great.

'Eh! my child, who can say! Nothing is impossible,' said the old man. 'My little Angelica will have to take her old father with her,' he said fondly.

'We must never separate, never, father,' cried she, flinging herself into his arms.

But when the summons to Windsor actually came—as De Horn had predicted it would—old Kauffmann was not equal to the journey, and Angelica set off very reluctantly alone. She left him with little Rosa in attend-

ance. If only Antonio had been there to cheer him she might have minded less.

Antonio was far away. He had travelled rapidly, and was already at his journey's end, thoughtfully pacing the sunshine as it flowed along a terraced walk. From the high battlemented terrace he could look down into a walled garden, with its great pots, and the citron and pomegranate trees. Some lemons still hung to the branches, burning like gold. Some aromatic scent still perfumed the air.

Sounds came from the rippling plain beyond the villa. Oxen were dragging their sweet-savoured loads. Some faint chord of voices, of the reed that a village Pan was piping to his flock—came floating across the melting Campagna and along the terrace. Antonio, as he walked, could fancy a slight figure drifting—could almost hear a gay voice echoing for a moment more clearly than the shepherd's pipe. Should he find her in that little pavilion at the farther end? He went up to it, opened the door, and looked in almost expecting to meet the glad flash of the azure he loved better even than those Italian skies. There was no one in the little arched pavilion, only from its casement there spread a sight of all the wonders of Italy rippling to the fragrant horizon. It was all lovely in its indefiniteness, this shadowy land of ilex and of cypress,

of tender light and delicate echo. . . . it was a different world to Angel's. At that very moment Angelica, muffled in John Joseph's own cloak, hooded, snooded, shodden with fur, was slowly travelling along the snowy English lanes that lead to Windsor, to the great Castle, sumptuous on its hill, to the old straggling city of gables, and of quaint memorials such as those that belong to our grotesque and fire-warmed land. In England, the snow was on the ground, the ice was lying in the pools and on the fields, the flying figures of the skaters were dazzling black across the white when Angelica drove into the town.

Antonio had given full directions before he left, and the chaise stopped at a gabled house, in Eton, fronting the Fairy Castle with its many towers and tall battlements. Some one looked from a latticed window, some one came to a door, there was a sound of the scampering of feet, and when Angelica, a poor shivering little drifting figure, alighted in the cold twilight, a kind-looking man, in a powdered wig, such as schoolmasters do not wear now-a-days, looked out from the parlour. He came forward and welcomed her kindly, standing in the snow and helping her across the threshold.

'Welcome, Mrs. Kauffmann. We are expecting you,' he said. 'Mr. Zucchi's friends are yours. You must be frozen by your journey. Welcome, my dear; let me introduce you to my girls,' and he threw open the

door and led Angel in upon his arm to a dazzling room, with faces, and fire-light, and voices. In her bewilderment she could see nothing at first. By degrees she came to her usual perceptions.

There were six or seven girls—full-grown, handsome young women—in mourning for their mother. Some wore muslin kerchiefs and plain mobcaps. Two of them were powdered and in full dress. One, however, was shaved and wore neither cap nor covering to her head. They all seemed to advance at once. Most of them were quite grave; only the bald one smiled.

'These are my daughters,' said Dr. Starr again, not knowing what else to say. 'They all know you by name, and through Mr. Zucchi. Here are Decie, Dosie, Alley, Jinny, Fanny, and that is Kitty. Patty is not yet come home. You must be frozen. Come near the fire.'

'Miss Kauffmann must indeed be cold after her long journey,' said the shaved young lady, dragging up a big chair.

'Well done, Jinny: that *is* a comfortable arm-chair for her to warm herself in,' said the father. 'I find a good arm-chair very resting after a long journey. I can tell you so from experience, Miss Kauffmann.'

'We ought to tell Miss Kauffmann at once that a message has been sent from the Castle for her. Her Majesty will be ready to sit for her portrait to-morrow at three o'clock,' said one of the young ladies . . .

'Are you not frightened to death?' cried Jinny. 'La! how terrified I should be if I had to paint the Queen's portrait.'

After a little pause the eldest daughter proposed to take Angelica up to see her room. She was a very sweet and noble-looking creature, with a gentle dignity of demeanour; her colour came and went when she spoke. 'I have had a fire lighted for you upstairs,' she said; 'I thought you might like best to be alone, after your long journey.'

'Capital thing, a fire this cold weather,' cried the father, striking his hands together. 'Take her up, Decie —take her up. I am delighted you remembered a fire for Miss Kauffmann.'

Decie led the way with a simple sort of dignity. She slid on before, and Angel followed in silence.

'This is the room Mr. Zucchi likes,' the young lady said, opening a low wooden door into a sloping bed-chamber. 'We heard from him yesterday. He had not reached his journey's end. I hope you will want for nothing while you are with us.'

Then three more sisters came in, attended to the fire, brought forward another chair and some hot spiced currant wine, which they made their visitor imbibe. All these young maidens were silent, swift, helpful, and friendly; Jinny the bald one was the most original and talkative of the whole party; she was only waiting for

her hair to grow to go out to India to keep house for a brother, she told Angelica. She looked on with bright grey eyes while Angelica unpacked her modest wardrobe her painting box, her canvas, her palettes and brushes.

Of all Angelica's transmigrations this seemed one of the most curious. Here she was a Calypso established in this quaint household, with a colony of nymphs to tend her and make her welcome. When Miss Jinny left the room, Calypso stood at the lattice peeping out at wide snowy fields, at the flowing river that crossed between the elms. There at half-a-mile's flight, stood the Castle rearing upon the height. A live king and queen were actually ruling from the round towers, sending messages to summon her to their court.

As she looked out across the white waste, she saw lights flaming from the casements and from the distant Castle itself. She herself was a Court lady now—thought the painter smiling—a countess in her husband's right? Some incongruous thought came to her in between two of Miss Jinny's visits, of her childhood, of the quiet far away Valley of Coire, with the rushing stream, and of the mother's face looking down into hers, innocent and wistful as she could remember it still. Sometimes Angel had thought of trying to paint her mother's face, but it seemed too dear to paint, too near her heart somehow. Here were her own eyes to look at in the window-pane,

with their new expression, and they seemed to her like her mother's to-night. She stood some time looking into and through the lattice window. The crisp snow was lying on the pond. The bare trees along the fields were brushing the wintry sky. The little Eton boys were all safe in their various cupboards. She could hear the cheerful voices and heels of Dr. Starr's young pupils trampling up some back wooden staircase that led to their part of the house, which was separated from that which the family and guests inhabited. The world was white and black. The little houses with their gables were beginning to light up. The people were crossing the bridge that led to Windsor. The river shuddered into blocks of floating ice, and Angel blew on her fingers to warm them before she finished unpacking, and as she blew upon her finger she saw that she had kept on her wedding-ring, which she usually wore on a chain round her neck. There it was, a sign that her dream was a reality, otherwise she might have doubted the whole thing, so brief, so vague did it all seem. Then some one knocked at the door, and Dosie Starr, the second daughter, came in, tall and blooming as any of the sisters, to bid Miss Kauffmann to come down to tea. She was followed by Miss Jinny ringing a bell. Its loud din seemed cheerful and reassuring, Angelica suddenly determined to give up wondering, to live from day to day, absorbed by

this regular existence; it seemed ordered to the minute, with a certain homely and yet delightful monotony.

What is the name of the country which is farthest from Bohemia? Is it Philistia? This was a Philistia so gentle, so kindhearted, so modest in its ways, that the grace of Bohemia itself seemed to belong to it. Dr. Starr, that contented person, was almost worshipped by his daughters. It was pretty to see them about him, listening to his words, attending to his wants. They were all so handsome and so naturally dignified and gentle, that although the house was small, there was neither ugliness or confusion in the events that went on there. Miss Starr, the eldest daughter, attended to the boys; Miss Dosie, the second, took the housekeeping, so the talkative Jinny informed Angelica. 'I am the clever ugly one, you know,' Miss Jinny announced; 'and as none of my sisters could be spared, they have fixed upon me to go to the Indies, and to keep my brother's house.'

'So you have brothers too?' said Angel.

'We are a perfect constellation of Starrs,' cried Miss Jinny; 'we have four brothers in India, we are eleven in all. Too many to remain at home, people say, but we could not spare one of us except me perhaps.'

'I am very glad you are all here,' said Angelica smiling.

'Is not Decie a darling lovely creature?' cried Jinny; 'but Dosie and Alethea are just as dear. Poor Kitty is not looking well just now; she is the most delicate of us all, and Patricia has been so busy among her poor that you have not yet seen her. People say she is the handsomest. 'I think' (here Miss Jinny became confidential) 'Mr. Zucchi, though he does not say so, admires her more than any, except Kitty, perhaps. He is going to paint Kitty's picture next time he comes. You have known him for years, have you not?' Angelica could only burst out in a warm rhapsody concerning her friend. They had grown up together. She had never known him to do an unkind or dishonourable action. He had a warm heart, and a generous disposition.

'He has been painting our china closet,' said Miss Jinny. 'My father met him at Frogmore, where Mr. Zucchi was decorating some of the apartments. Miss Moser introduced us to him, and all this year he has constantly been staying with us, and with Mr. Evans.'

'Who is Mr. Evans?' asked Angelica curiously. It all interested her, and even, if the truth were told, she somewhat resented the delicate vine-leaves and myrtle-branches that she recognized meandering upon the walls of the old china closet, which Miss Jinny showed her on their way down-stairs. There were also four figures painted by Zucchi on the ceiling, admirable liknesses of the four eldest young ladies. One held a book, the other

neld a cornucopia, the third carried a spindle, and the fourth a compass.

'*Now* I understand his strange conduct,' thought Angelica, as they groped their way by twisting places and dark lattices to the narrow little pannelled passage that led to the tea-table. Angelica found a pretty domestic scene in the parlour; a silver kettle hissing, a homely evening meal of silver and honey and oaten cake, spread out hospitably upon the mahogany table. The simplicity and kindness of the household made Angel feel happy at once, happier than she had felt since that haunting morning.

Everything was shining, fragrant, somewhat chill, though the fire of which so much had been said, was burning brightly. Dr. Starr talked of a thaw, but the town was still wrapped in its dazzling shroud. The low windows with their diamond panes were marked black upon the whiteness of the snow, which had gathered in little heaps against the hinges. The birds came hopping along the ledges with their puffed breasts. The sisters were sitting down one by one smiling and joking with one another; the Mr. Evans, Jinny had mentioned had come to tea. He was helping dark-eyed Miss Dosie Starr with the kettle. Decie, the eldest of all, a long sweet figure, was standing by the fire, apparently watching a plate of hot toast, but secretly far away. Dr. Starr sat at the end of the mahogany table, with gleaming buckles,

and handsome brown eyes, smiling upon his children. Dosie, the tea-maker, had eyes like his, dark and animated. She was calling out to him gaily. There was a certain ability and distinction in all she did, and if she poured out tea or gave out linen, it somehow became an act of gentle grace, as well as of duty, in her hands. Alethea, the third sister, was the tallest of the three; it was she Antonio had represented with a spindle, and in truth this young maiden spun many a mystic thread as she sat by her father's side. She had a rare gift for music, and to her belonged the little instrument in the corner by the window. She would play the chapel organ sometimes—she, their music, making music for them all; or she would listen with wonder in her eyes when the great throbs passed over the people's heads as the waves of a rising sea. As they were all gathering in, the door opens and the fourth sister enters—Patricia, with the pale head and the auriole of golden hair. She carries a book in her hand, a book which opens upon heroic stories, such as those which Angel herself had dreamed at times, and which Patricia studies with her father. Dr. Starr is very proud of his girls' attainments, and teaches them himself.

CHAPTER XXV.

AVE CÆSAR.

THE appointment with the Queen was, they told her, for three o'clock on the following day. Angel set off in a chair, with an attendant to carry her palette and boxes, with many farewells and encouraging signals from her kind hostesses. The distance from the house to the Castle was not great; the bridge was soon crossed, the steep soon surmounted. Peaceful sentinels do not oppose her entrance, and she finds herself within the royal precincts, in the great open court with the King's palaces and towers, and the King's pleasure-gardens all about; and the gables of the poor knights to typify his bounty, and the King's gloom of cloister for his meditation, and the vaulted Chapel windows to light his high devotion.

The bearers stop to rest for an instant. Angelica from her chair can look into the great moat, and through an archway, across the steep court, she catches a glimpse of the whole wide country spreading beyond the terrace.

Then the men trudge on again to a door at the end of the inner court, where two footmen in the royal uniform are standing.

Mrs. Kauffmann seems to be expected.

She is helped out, her cases are taken from the porter and from the chair by the attendants; one red-coated footman leads the way, the other follows, carrying her apparatus.

Angelica tripped up the great steps, feeling as if she were some sort of doomed princess at the gates of the ogre's palace. Her heart fluttered; she would have been thankful to run away. She envied the servant who was calmly following her and carrying her easels and brushes, she envied the sentries who knew exactly what they had to do, and who could not go wrong if they continued walking up and down outside and shouldering their guns. So she mounted, trying to reassure herself with some of her father's adages, and with the remembrance of her visit to the Cardinal at Coire.

But that had been nothing nearly so alarming. Then orange-flowers were in the air, warm winds were blowing, the birds were flying among the nestling trees in the garden, kind priests were resting in the shade. This was so cold, so hard, and chill—the great walls were so massive, the soldiers looked so utterly indifferent. The lovely great view was white with snow and swathed in mists.

She was going to meet she knew not what restraints

and difficulties. People whose words and looks must be different from her own, since they inspired all bystanders with awe. Dr. Starr's lectures had not been without their effect on the impressionable Mrs. Kauffmann. It was indeed a solemn privilege to be allowed to depict the sacred and anointed heads.

Cæsar-worship does not end with Mr. Gibbon's History. The altars of Augustus could scarcely have been more fervently served than those of good King George and Queen Charlotte. Eton by tradition was loyal to its ruling sovereign, and Dr. Starr, who was a simple and serious man, had out-traditioned Eton in his devotion. The lively Jinny once got into dire disgrace for some audacious revolutionary sentiments.

'My child,' said her father mildly, but earnestly, 'what pit is yawning before you? What danger do you not run by allowing such idle words to pass your lips? Innocent laughter I should be the first to encourage; but this is indeed unbecoming censure of those placed by Providence in authority over you; persons called to the rule of a mighty kingdom, and thus entitled to the reverence of the young. My dear child, I am grieved to have to speak so seriously.

Poor Jinny left the room in penitential tears.

Meantime Angel climbs the palace steps.

One or two groups of pages and attendants were standing about, looking not unlike pictures themselves.

A page in the court dress of the period came forward and politely invited Angelica to follow him.

She was led up a small side staircase, but from lunettes and turns and archways she catches glimpses of the stately stone flight. Then she came at once into a room where the attendants requested her to wait. It was a lofty sunny room, hung with tapestry. Vashti, Esther, Ahasuerus were all playing their parts in the loomed web; the light from the tall windows warmed the place; the soft tints of the great carpets seemed to float upon the walls as dreams half defined. Through the hall windows came the December sunlight. It fell upon the great paved court below.

Angelica's very natural emotion and agitation at the thought of the ordeal before her extended itself to all the inanimate objects round about her, and gave a certain life to the figures as they met her gaze. Over one door hung a Queen Mary in her pathetic veil and dress of black, with her sad white face. Esther was on her knees before Ahasuerus decked in her jewels. Angelica thought of her own petition, and wondered whether her request would be granted.

Something more than the mere execution of her picture seemed to depend upon this interview. Safe in her pocket she carried that letter from De Horn, reminding her that she had now his interests to consult as well as her own. 'Perhaps,' thought Angelica, not without

terror, 'his whole future career may depend upon the excellence of my likeness of her Majesty.'

She started, hearing a sound; it was not the Queen, but some attendants who came and removed the easel into an adjoining room.

This was the Vandyke room, where Angelica was finally established. The noble army of martyrs was hanging on the walls. King Charles—his children with their sweet eyes—Strafford listening to the letter. . . .

All this sumptuous light and dignity seemed to bid her welcome, and to give her confidence; she felt as if she had found a friend now that Vandyke's noble hand was held out to her. She was but a woman, but she too could paint, could rule light and space, call harmonies of colour to her service. Her terrors seemed to vanish as she waited, looking and noting with attentive eyes.

As she looked about she caught sight of herself in a glass inserted in a long shutter, and was struck by the expression of her own features. 'Surely I can depend upon myself,' she said. 'It is not for nothing that I have my gift, my inspiration.' The lady in the glass opened her eyes in response, and Angelica suddenly saw a second figure reflected there, and turned overwhelmed with shame to meet the Queen. She could only stand against the wall in silent confusion. . . .

Fortunately Queen Charlotte smiled graciously, seated herself immediately in her place, Angelica fell to work.

The interview ended more prosperously than it began.

Angelica told them all about it when she came back to the gabled house. The Queen had been most gracious, had made no allusion to the looking-glass, had praised her work, had appointed a second sitting for the following day.

The king himself, in his blue coat, had come in.

'What did he say?' asked Jinny and Dosie. 'Tell us quickly.'

'Shall I tell you?' said Angel, smiling. 'He said, "Ah! very good, very good indeed, Miss Zimmermann! Paint a great many pictures, hey?"'

The sisters looked a little disappointed.

'Why, papa himself might have said as much!' said Miss Jinny. 'Papa has been asking for you. He brought in a letter somebody left. Have you seen it, Miss Kauffmann?' and Jinny began looking about the sideboard-shelf and the chimney-ledge.

'*Is* that your father's handwriting?' said the young lady, inquisitively, as she found the letter. 'I suppose it is a foreign writing.'

When Angelica saw the writing she turned somewhat pale, and almost immediately left the room. Then she ran upstairs to her own chamber and shut the door, and slipped the bolt. Then she stood up in the middle of the low latticed room, and, with a beating heart, read the

crooked lines by the twilight that came through the lattice. At first she could scarcely see them for agitation:—

My Adored Wife.—The time is at hand for all to be disclosed. I need no longer try the noble patience you have hitherto shown. Expect me in the course of a day. When I come you shall confide all in the Queen, and she I know will befriend us. Believe in my unchanging devotion, and forgive the wrongs I may have done you.

Devotedly yours till death,

F. de Horn.

She read—she read again Was she disappointed? She could not tell.

Angelica could have wished that her instructions had been a little more explicit; that her mysterious husband had said something more definite about himself, about the wrongs even to which he alluded, that he had given his reasons for secrecy.

She was vaguely excited, vaguely provoked, bewildered. She hated mystery, and she knew not what to think, as she turned this piece of paper in her hand. Her eyes filled with tears—heavy burning tears—that fell upon the letter, which, to tell the truth, had cost its writer many a struggle, for the Count was not handy with his pen.

Poor little thing, crying in the twilight! The tears relieved her heart, until she dried them to the sound of one of Miss Jinny's summoning bells.

As the evening went on the sisters gathered round Alethea's instrument, and Angel joined in the chorus they

were practising. They all listened, with expressive looks of admiration, to her beautiful voice. At one time she had seriously thought of making music her profession. Alethea played the accompaniment.

They made her sing by herself when their chorus was ended, and Angelica tried to remember some of the peasant songs from her native Coire. There was one upspringing melody, with wild, sweet wings (so it seemed to Miss Jinny, who was listening in the window). The music seemed to carry them all away into some distant life, to bring the wide rural freshness of natural things into the shining little English parlour; to bring the breath of wild thyme, the rush of streams, the peace and uplifting of nature upon them all, stillbound in their prim conventional order. Angelica's own heart was eased as she sang. She herself seemed to be suddenly convinced. It was a resurrection of hope, of reality striking in harmony of sound, and expressing the sympathy of all true souls. The notes met, embraced with heart's gladness, struck their chords, and died away.

Miss Jinny had been laughing and crying in her corner. When Angelica finished she rushed up and kissed her vehemently, saying, 'You *are* a dear creature!'

CHAPTER XXVI.

FOURBE FANTAISIE.

NEXT day Angelica, her blithest self, was at her work, and she had made considerable progress before Queen Charlotte entered the gallery. The Kauffmann was painting eagerly, too eagerly, indeed, thinking of what the Queen would say, of what she should say to the Queen. Her mysterious little letter was still in her pocket. She longed to have her explanation over, but she seemed to hear something in her ears repeating, 'Wait with patience.'

Angelica was getting very tired of patience. The Queen sat with great dignity and affability, and passed the time asking Miss Kauffmann questions about herself, about the things she did, the way she spent her life. Every now and then the pages came, in their black court dresses, bringing messages and retiring immediately.

Once the door opened, and a stout lady, with a red face, walked in, curtsied deeply, and waited for the Queen to address her, which she did almost immediately.

'I sent for you, my good Schwellenberg,' said Queen Charlotte, 'that you should see what Miss Kauffmann is engaged upon. I was sure that she would appreciate a candid criticism upon my picture from so old and faithful a friend as yourself.'

Poor Miss Kauffmann herself felt far less assured of this fact. The Queen had acted in all kindness, knowing her attendant's peculiarity, and the disfavour with which she viewed anything in which she had had no voice.

'Yes, your Majesty,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg, bustling forward, 'I vill see.'

'It is necessary to know something of art to understand a picture in this early stage,' said Angelica, and she looked up doubtfully. Mrs. Schwellenberg caught the look and the words and frowned.

'You make de eye so small,' said she, 'one need not be painters to see dat.'

'Are you sure of the fact?' said the Queen. 'Perhaps, as Miss Kauffmann suggests, it is the effect of the unfinished painting.'

'Oh, ver well,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg. 'It is as your Majesty choose. If your Majesty ask me, I answers; if not, I keeps my 'pinions to me.'

Miss Angel's blue eyes twinkled a little maliciously. Mrs. Schwellenberg retreated, and the brush went steadily on.

Presently another messenger came in, and handed a folded paper to the Queen, which she read, and then saying, 'I beg your pardon, Miss Kauffmann,' beckoned Mrs. Schwellenberg to her side. 'Will you go to the King, and remind him, from me, that Count de Horn will be here at a little before five o'clock?' she said, in a low voice. 'He has asked for a private interview. I will receive him in the great gallery. I am always glad to welcome an old friend.'

Mrs. Schwellenberg left the room. The message seemed simple and unimportant enough. Angelica sat paralysed. What had she heard? She tried to go on painting, but her hand trembled. She tried to speak, but something in her throat rose and choked her words. Her heart throbbed and throbbed with strange passionate triumph.

'Yes, Count Frederick de Horn is a very old acquaintance of mine,' the Queen continued, half to herself, half-addressing the painter. 'He distinguished himself in the late war. He has come over on a special mission to the King.'

'Oh, Madam!' said Angelica, rather wildly.

The Queen was preoccupied, and did not notice her agitation. After a moment's silence she spoke again. 'Pray, Miss Kauffmann, if it is not disagreeable to you to answer, tell me, is this rumour true that I hear concerning

you and Mr. Reynolds, and am I to congratulate you upon your approaching marriage?'

Here was an opening. Did the Queen suspect already?

'No, Madam,' said Angelica, faltering; '*that* is not true, but——'

'But there is some one else,' said the Queen, graciously; and as she spoke she glanced at Angelica's left hand, upon which her wedding-ring was shining.

'That ring tells a story, perhaps,' said Queen Charlotte, gravely. 'Since when is it the custom for young unmarried ladies to wear wedding-rings?'

Angelica blushed crimson; but what did it matter? He was come. The hour was come. Triumphant, palpitating, dazzled, she forgot everything save that the supreme moment had arrived. Here was the Queen, august, all-powerful. Here was her hero close at hand. It seemed to her that she could hear his horses' feet in the courtyard below. With beating heart, with hands tremblingly clasped, she stepped into the great light of the window and stood before the amazed Queen Charlotte.

'Madam, you have guessed all; your Majesty can read all hearts! Yes, it is true that my ring tells a story. Your clemency alone can make it a happy one.'

The Queen's look was scarcely encouraging. Queen

Charlotte, as it is well known, had an aversion to extremes of feeling and vehemence of expression.

'When you are more composed, at some future time,' she said, 'I may listen to what you have to tell me.'

As for Angelica, no sooner had she heard the first sound of her own passionate voice than she suddenly remembered her promise—all De Horn's warnings—remembered that she had not yet leave to speak—the words died away upon her lips. She turned faint and giddy.

'You are ill?' said the Queen, rising.

No, Madam,' said Angelica, recovering herself by a great effort. 'Will your Majesty excuse me if I have for a moment forgotten my self-control?'

Dignified Queen Charlotte relaxes her stern frown—the lovely, imploring face before her is almost irresistible.

'I see you are much agitated,' she said. 'You can wait in Mrs. Schwellenberg's apartment, and speak to me after the audience. I will then appoint another sitting.'

And, almost at that instant, once more the attendants entered, and Mrs. Schwellenberg herself returned, with another deep curtsey. Angelica hardly knew what happened, hardly heard what they all said. Did not some one tell her to wait—that Mrs. Schwellenberg would return?

The Queen left with some state, followed by her

attendants; they all went away, and she was left alone. Angelica's agitation was too great for her to keep still. Although she said to herself that all was well, a secret anxiety almost overwhelmed her at times. Was he come? Was it thus they were to meet, as in some fairy-tale, at the summit of prosperity and success? . . .

A sudden terror had come after her passing conviction. At one moment she felt safe at the end of her troubles, the next instant seemed to terrify her, overwhelm her with alarms of every description. She began pacing the room impatiently; she could scarcely endure the suspense. Presently it occurred to her that she might return into the tapestried chamber, from whence she could see the courtyard, see him descend from the carriage, and perhaps recognise her husband's liveries, if indeed he had come in state openly, with his coach and servants in attendance.

She opened a wrong door somehow, and found herself in a dark and lofty lobby, vaulted, lighted by many windows, some looked out upon the great staircase, where pages were standing and people passing. Some servants came up the steps; a soldier standing by presented arms. Then came a procession crossing the marble, vivid, deliberate—how it stamped itself upon her brain! A page went first, then followed a red-haired man, dressed in black, carrying his cocked hat under his arm; he looked up at

a picture as he passed, and Angelica saw him very plainly. It was a face utterly unknown to her. A secretary with papers was walking in his suite, then more servants in the well-known green liveries.

They swept along the marble and through a great doorway, which was not closed behind them. Angelica came out to the head of the great staircase and watched them walk away along the great gallery towards the inner room where the King was to receive them.

As the last person in the train disappeared Angelica turned to one of the pages standing by. 'Who was that?' she said.

The young man looked surprised at the unexpected apparition of a powdered lady coming out from the apartments unattended.

'That is the Swedish Envoy, Colonel Count Frederick de Horn, on his way to an audience with the King,' he answered, in an oracular voice, and then he turned on his heel and went to join the others standing by the fire down below.

Frederick de Horn! She staggered, put her hand to her head, and shrank back in a frightened, bewildered way, as if she had seen a ghost.

Was that *Frederick de Horn?*

She did not know how the time passed; she stood petrified with a thousand thoughts, almost too painful to realise. Suspicions crowded upon her. It was some one

who had taken her husband's name? Some impostor, some wicked person. She hated herself; she would *not* suspect. Then she hurried impetuously back into the room where she had been at work. Almost as she entered the door opened, and some one came in; not the Queen, alas! but her fierce and fat attendant.

'Her Majesty bids you come in my rooms,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg; 'she is now with de Count. She vill come back to hear vat you 'ave to say. De Count—I know vat he come for. De Queen cannot 'elp him. Prepare yourself, Miss,' and she gave a snort and looked at Angelica from head to foot. 'I tink I can guess it all vat you 'ave to say.'

'Can you guess?' said poor Angel, wildly. 'How can you guess? Who told you?'

'I know many tings,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg 'Frederick de Horn, he often ask my advice. I have stayed at his castle at Hafvudsta. He made a stupid marriage. He did not come to me den,' said the malicious woman. 'Dat is what 'appens when one is not particular; people is made fools off. I guess you 'ave been made a fool off by some ones.'

'What do you mean? Have you seen Count de Horn now?' persisted Angelica, wildly. 'Why is he come? He is not the only Count de Horn? I myself know another who comes from Hafvudsta.'

'Dere is no other,' said the old woman, 'only his little

son. Countess de Horn was made a fool off too, by a man who lived in the house and stole her papers and jewels, and forged her name. De Count 'ave come to find him. Dat is von reason he is come,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg. 'I hope he will ketch the tief, and 'ang him on the gallows.'

Angelica turned with a face of horror, then suddenly flashed out; 'Silence, woman!' she cried, stepping forward with a swift, mad fury of indignation.

Mrs. Schwellenberg shrugged her fat shoulders, then, seeing Angelica's fierce looks, she shrieked, threw up her hands, and waddled out as hard as she could go to tell the Queen. She had spoken by the merest chance, but Angel turned sick and pale and cold, and gave a sort of wild cry. She understood it all now. Now it was all clear. Now she understood everything—the sense of *something* to be dreaded. Now she understood that poor enigmatical letter. Now she knew that she had dimly suspected him all along. She remembered his terror at the ball, his mysterious embarrassments and allusions. Some cruel truth had dawned upon her. *He*, her husband, as she called him, was the impostor. Now—now she knew herself deceived, disgraced hopelessly—hopelessly. She felt as if the atmosphere were choking her—as if the Castle, with all its towers and walls, was crushing her down—as if the one thing to do was to escape, to break away from this fatal spot

To escape from it all, from the Queen's gracious, maddening condescension, from the little pages and round-eyed ladies in waiting, to be *herself*, silent, desperate, alone, with this terrible overwhelming revelation—this was the one idea which presented itself to Angelica's mind. A sort of state horror seemed to her to fill the room, to come round about her, closing in and suffocating her. She went to a window and madly tried to open it, but she wrenched the handle the wrong way in her agitation and hurt her hand. With a sort of shuddering cry she turned away, and as she did so she caught sight of the picture of Queen Mary hanging grimly over the door, with its ghostly emblems of scaffolds and of parting prayers. To die, she thought—only to die—that would be less hard than to be deceived, less hard than to deceive. She had deceived her father—she had meant no harm—she was justly punished now. Punished—she was disgraced—overwhelmed! She had mechanically seized her cloak, and as she sought for an exit from the room she saw her face reflected white, ghastly white, in the looking-glass. She rushed to the door, flung it open, and hurried down the gallery—anything to get away from this cruel place, where such grief had found her out. She left her work on the easel, her gloves lying upon the floor, her dream of happiness broken into a thousand shreds—all scattered and dispersed.

That little procession seemed branded on her mind:

the Envoy, with his unknown face, the servants in their familiar livery.

The pages stared at her as she passed, but did not attempt to stop her. A porter stood by the outer door, and she signed to him to open: her throat was too much parched for her to speak. She came out with a great sigh into the open air of heaven.

CHAPTER XXVII

NOW FROM THE CAPITOL STEPS.

Then she heard a chiming of bells, a humming of voices in the air. The people were passing from afternoon chapel, crossing the courtyard, with its many old Tudor gates and the archways and inner courts. The old Knights were returning to their houses, and creeping from their stalls, where they sat Sunday after Sunday enshrined in state, with heraldic flags waving above their heads. Angel felt inclined to clutch one of them by the hand as he passed and say, 'Tell me, is it true—is it all nothing, nothing?' The people were quietly coming out of chapel; peaceful prayers incarnate walking away in the shape of men and of women, some worn by time—all cruel, all indifferent to her woe. To avoid them the bewildered woman turned into the cloister. A great swell of organ-notes pursued her. The doors of St. George's Chapel were thrown open wide. She flew on, looking straight before her, with strange, fixed

crazed eyes. Somehow in this blind flight she came to the steps that led from the kingly Castle-heights to the wide and subject world. She saw the great snow-streaked plain sweeping at her feet, and she longed in a mad, bewildered way to leap forward and end it all. It was a strange, wild experience in this bright and gentle life—one that scarcely belonged to her nature. Her nerves were quivering with a poignant shame; her heart was so heavy within her breast that it seemed to weigh her down, but her feet took her safe from habit. The town, with its streets and passengers, its toil of life, was spread down below; the people looking up may have seen the poor scared figure with the flying cloak coming headlong down the flight. Then her head turned; she could hardly keep steady for a moment. She was obliged to stop, to cling to the wall. This very difficulty distracted her. She reached the end of the flight safely somehow, and came out through the archway into the street. As Angel still hurried on down the middle of the road she thought that people were looking at her. Some one stopped and spoke to her and asked if she were ill.

'Am I ill?' said Angelica. Her own voice was quite shrill and strange. Then she heard other voices, and her name softly called in tones of commiseration, and without having seen that anyone was approaching she found herself surrounded, alone no longer. An enclosing kind-

ness seemed to have come between her and curious strangers; a home seemed to meet her there in that desolate street, a home alive with kind faces and voices and encircling arms. Four of the girls with whom she was staying had come, according to their wont, walking by couples up Windsor Street, to meet their sisters returning from afternoon chapel. They had already encountered Patty and Alethea with their prayer-books advancing with the dispersing stream of chapel-goers, when a poor bewildered figure emerged from under the archway and came flitting towards them. They hardly recognised it.

'Is it? . . . It *is* Angelica!' said Decie, springing forward. They ran up to her with their gentle, hurrying steps, and came round her as she fell almost fainting into their arms. Her head sank upon Alley's shoulder; Patty's kind arm was round her waist; Decie and Dosie stood sheltering her from the assembling bystanders.

It was like one of those allegories Miss Angel loved to paint: the pitying maidens with their kind hearts and voices protecting the poor stricken lady in her forlorn distress. They did not ask what it was, but she told them then and there without preamble. 'Oh! I have had a blow,' she said; and she pressed her hand to her aching heart. 'A cruel blow. I have done wrong—and yet there was no great wrong—and I am punished. Oh! punished and disgraced for all my life.'

'What has happened?' said Decie.

'It is that Queen—I know it,' cried impetuous Jinny. 'I wish she were——'

'Wait, Jinny. Hush!' said Alethea. 'Miss Kauffmann will tell us all.' And she encircled Angelica more closely with her arm; and the girls all moved forward together, leading their poor broken guest along the road.

Angel made no resistance, feeling safe in their custody. She was utterly broken down—utterly at an end of her strength. 'I cannot keep this secret any longer,' she panted forth at last. 'This morning when I woke I thought I was married to Count de Horn—look at my ring, it is a fortnight since he gave it me in our chapel. Now I know—now—that those we trust deceive; those we believe in are the first to turn against us; those who have promised to return come not. He promised he would come when he left me, but I have never seen him since; and now—now I know the very name he gave me was not his own. I have seen the real De Horn. My husband is a liar. Trust no one—no one. Take warning by me.'

'Oh! no, no, no!' cried Decie, the eldest of the sisters, speaking with unexpected life and passion, and suddenly striking some individual note among them all. 'Do not fear to trust; none whom you truly love can really deceive; they sin against you, but they are yours—it is the law of life.'

Dosie and Ally looked strangely at their sister. They

knew why she exclaimed so passionately. Angelica was comforted for the moment.

'I pray that you are right: but is not mine a cruel story?' she said, with a wild sort of sob. 'I know not what my fate is, if I am married or not married, or to whom I am pledged, or from whom I received my wedding-ring.'

The girls murmured a sort of chorus of sympathy and encouragement.

'All will be explained. Father must take you home. He will make all straight for you,' they said, soothing her, and they led her on, regardless of the wondering looks of the people.

As they passed across the bridge with its frozen ivy houses, they were forced to stand up against the low parapet, while a great coach with green liveries and footmen dragged by four horses clattered past on its way from the Castle.

Angelica hid her face in her hands.

'*That* is the real De Horn,' she whispered; her sobs broke out afresh, nor ceased till they reached the house. The young ladies almost carried her to her room, laid her down, spent and wearied, upon the bed, brought lavender and bathed her temples.

> What shall be said, for words are thorns to grief?
> Withhold thyself a little, and fear the gods.

Their kindness was so great, their sympathy so tender

and unobtrusive, that Angel felt comforted somehow, and at last, worn by her miserable tears, she fell into an exhausted sleep; from which she was only awakened by a messenger from the Castle: the Queen wished to speak with her again. But she was in no state to present herself before her gracious benefactress.

Good Dr. Starr himself returned in the coach which had been sent, with all explanations, and expressions of deep gratitude for favours received.

He came home disturbed indeed, but flattered by his reception. He had not repeated all Angelica's confidence; he had described her state and dwelt upon her nervous feverish condition. Until something more definite could be ascertained, he had, good man that he was, and the father of daughters, felt that it might be better for Angelica's future happiness that the story should not get abroad. He could, as he well knew, trust his girls' prudence. Jinny herself could be silent when desired to be discreet

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I KNEW THE RIGHT, AND DID IT.

ONE day soon after these events, Mr. Reynolds was painting in his studio, when he received a letter in an unknown writing:—

SIR,—May I intrude upon your valuable time, and request that you will come at your very earliest convenience to Mrs. Angelica Kauffmann's? There is great trouble in the house, and your help and opinion will, I am convinced, prove invaluable to our poor friends, whom I feel myself scarcely competent to advise. Your obedient faithful servant,

W. M. STARR.

The painter went on for a few minutes painting the model before him. It was perhaps Kitty Clive, smiling and winsome; but after a few minutes he found he could not continue, and he made some excuse.

'Are you indisposed? have you had some distracting summons?' said the sitter.

'Yes, indeed,' he answered; 'it is one I cannot neglect.'

Ten minutes later he was prepared to hurry off to

Golden Square. But on his very doorstep he met a tall grave man, powdered and dressed in black, who introduced himself as the writer of the note.

It was Dr. Starr, who, without preamble, begged to be taken into a private room. Mr. Reynolds led him into the dining-room, and stood leaning against the marble chimney-piece as he listened to the story which Dr. Starr told briefly and clearly, and without much comment.

'I hear that the Swedish Envoy has left a secretary behind him in London,' said Dr. Starr, after he had briefly told the story. 'I brought the lady up to her father this morning. I found poor Mr. Kauffmann in the most pitiable state. It seems that the priest who married Mrs. Angelica to this impostor has revealed the whole plot. The man also hints that for a consideration he could disclose still more. I dread leaving these poor people without protection, at the mercy of those villains' revelations.'

'But we, assuredly, had best make enquiries for ourselves,' said Mr. Reynolds.

After a brief consultation Mr. Reynolds parted from Dr. Starr, and took the direct road to Lord W.'s house. Even if he were absent, as he feared, Lady Diana would give good advice, and she would befriend Angelica.

Lord and Lady W. were both away from London; only Lady Diana was at home alone with the children. She sent them into the garden to play, and left her more

congenial occupations of horn-book and story-telling to listen to Mr. Reynolds' revelations. She took it all in immediately.

'It is all true,' she cried, flushing with anger. 'I know it, I feel it. I have suspected it for some time past. We have been blinded, every one of us. Good heavens! She must have been married that very morning I met her coming out of the chapel in Spanish Place. Now I understand her strange behaviour. Go to her, Mr. Reynolds. I will follow; I will come to Golden Square and bring my friend, Sir John Fielding, with me, in less than an hour's time. He is a magistrate; he will know what to do.'

'Let me go to him,' said Mr. Reynolds; and then at her suggestion he also walked off to the house of a certain Baron de Brandt, a Swede, settled in London.

It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Reynolds reached Golden Square. Old Kauffmann, who had been watching for him in the hall, admitted him in immediately. He was trembling, unshaved, unwashed; he caught hold of the painter's arm with his two brown hands.

'Oh, you are come at last!' he said. 'I thought you were never coming;' then when he had got Mr. Reynolds within, he came close up to him whispering, 'That fellow is upstairs; she insisted on seeing him alone. He cannot explain himself; he cannot deny his impostures. My child is mad, is possessed,' cried the old man, sinking

down in a leap on the steps that led to the upper floor. 'She has forgotten her careful training,' he cried, wringing his hands; 'the example I have set her, the friends who have honoured me in her; she has sacrificed her peace, her life, to an impostor.'

'I fear it is too true. I have been making enquiries in several quarters,' said Mr. Reynolds, gravely. 'The real Count de Horn embarked at Dover yesterday, and left for Sweden. This man, whom we have all entertained, has assumed a name to which he has no right. I have applied for a warrant, and I have spoken to a magistrate, for there are now rumours of a previous marriage,' said Mr. Reynolds, pacing the hall. 'Lady Diana, to whom this villain had the audacity to propose in Venice, will help us to unravel his history.'

'Come, come,' cried the old man, with sudden energy, rising to his feet. 'Let us confront him, monster that he is. I would not have them left alone, but that it was her wish. *You* are a true friend,' cried the old man, suddenly flinging himself into Mr. Reynolds' arms.

The Englishman, somewhat embarrassed, drew gently back. The old German, repulsed by him, clung to the banisters, broken and trembling. Mr. Reynolds stood looking on, full of sincerest pity and concern, scarce knowing what to do or to say to comfort such sorrow. He himself was very pale, his bland lips were firmly closed; but what was his feeling compared to this?

Alas! he wondered, would it have been better had he trusted more to the instinct which had once led him to Angelica, which had touched him so keenly when she held out her hand, that instinct which was still existing somewhere in his secret heart, but kept under by his deliberate will. Would that he could now stretch out his hand and rescue her from her sea of trouble! Once more the mist came into his eyes, with some bitter pang of passing remorse. Was it indeed of her, or of himself and his own material interest, that he had thought when he left her.

John Joseph, who was in tears, wiped them away in a cloud of snuff with his great coloured handkerchief, and assumed some dignity of bearing, as they entered the studio, which the afternoon sun was blinding.

Then suddenly old Kauffmann gave an angry leap and rushed across the room. Mr. Reynolds stepped back ashamed and provoked beyond words or expression of words.

The two were in the window, their backs to the light. Angelica was standing holding to De Horn's arm, and looking up into his face. De Horn was speaking in a low voice. She seemed to have relented, to be forgiving all, to be listening to him, yielding quietly to his persuasions, looking forgiveness. Her nature was utterly feeble, unreasoning, unreliable, thought Mr. Reynolds, with mingled pity and scorn. With a sort of shriek old

Kauffmann rushed up to her, and would have torn her away in his speechless indignation. Angelica turned: with one hand she still held by De Horn's arm, with the other she caught her father's angrily upraised hand. She looked very pale but quite composed.

'Listen, dearest,' she said to the old man. 'I wish you to know all. He has told me all. He loves me, indeed he does, and although he has deceived me in other ways, indeed he has not deceived me in that. He has shown me the letter you sent him this morning by the priest. It is a very cruel one, dear father. Have you forgotten the days when you yourself were young and loved and were loved?'

'Silence, unhappy girl,' the old man cried. 'Oh, for shame! Mr. Reynolds is witness that I only meant to spare you. This man is an impostor, a lacquey in his master's clothes, who dared to come into the presence of honest people, and to rob and to lie, and to deceive an old man and a helpless woman. He is married already. He is perjured. He——'

The words failed in his frantic agitation, and John Joseph could not go on. De Horn's face turned to an ashy paleness. He had not imagined that all would be so soon discovered; but for the moment in the presence of all these witnesses, he determined to put the best countenance he could upon it.

This false De Horn, seeing his one advantage, kept

tight hold by the little hand that seemed alone to befriend him.

'You may call me what you will,' he said, not without emotion; 'but this lady is nevertheless my wife. She was married to me at the Catholic Chapel by the priest whom you yourself saw. She went there of her own free will; her goodness induces her to overlook the wrongs I have done to her, to hold by the validity of the ceremony. . . . Come, my idol,' he said, turning to her. 'Let us leave this censorious country, where cruel things are said and offences imputed. I will protect you in future, and you shall never regret your confidence in me.'

'Angelica!' shrieked the poor old father, flinging himself upon her and grasping her in his arms. 'Are you mad? Do you hear? He is married already. Ask Mr. Reynolds. He is ——'

'Leave her!' cried De Horn, in a sudden black tempest of fury, trying to push off the old man, who stumbled and fell, perhaps feeling that it was expected of him to do so.

Mr. Reynolds came up greatly shocked.

Angelica, with a cry, started away from De Horn, and, kneeling by her father, raised his grey head on to her lap. He was not hurt. Seeing her terrified face he recovered immediately. It was an agonising scene for her—horrible, and miserable—the most miserable of her life.

I think there is some saving grace in honesty of pur-

pose, in truth of feeling, that helps people out of cruel passes which seem almost insurmountable at the time.

Angelica could not love De Horn, she knew him too little; but she had some strange feeling of loyalty towards him, and his wrong-doing could not change this. It seemed to her as if, having more to forgive made the link that bound them even more close. As her father rose to his feet she too sprang up and stood with steady eyes fixed on her husband, so she called him. The first accusation had seemed little to her in comparison to this last, that of his previous marriage.

Was he married? She could not, would not believe it. Mr. Reynolds could not mean that. 'Oh, tell me,' she said to De Horn; 'you owe me the truth. Do not be afraid; I will not desert you.' Her tones were utterly sweet, and came from her very heart. 'Are you already married? Am not I your wife?' She went up to him and put her gentle hand on his shoulder and looked at him fixedly with her two steadfast eyes.

'You are a saint indeed,' said the man, suddenly flushing up crimson, all touched and overcome by her confidence. 'This is the truth: I have a Protestant wife in Sweden, but I myself am a Catholic, and my marriage with her has been disputed. We were only wedded according to Protestant rites. You, madam, are a Catholic, and the priest assured me that the ceremony was valid.'

'That case had better be tried,' said Mr. Reynolds,

quietly. 'I should think there would be little doubt of the verdict.'

'The verdict would give her most certain and effectual release from any promises she might have made me, were they ten times more valid,' said De Horn, with a strange laugh. 'Do you know what punishment is reserved in this country and my own for persons convicted of bigamy?'

Mr. Reynolds flushed and bit his lips, and began to pace the room.

'Listen, listen!' cried old Kauffmann suddenly, laughing in a ghastly sort of way, and scuttling to the window, which he threw wide open. He was almost beside himself with grief and rage, and theatrical effects came to him naturally. He pointed to the window.

From the street below came hoarse voices, loudly shouting and calling the last dying speeches of some malefactors hung at Tyburn the day before. The sounds swelled into the room and seemed to fill it with the miserable din.

'I know all that,' said De Horn, quietly. 'I have known it all the time, and if it had not been for this lady's presence, long ago I should have escaped the country.'

Angel looked from De Horn to Mr Reynolds, to whom she turned with a wild appealing glance. 'You are my friend, are you not?' she said faintly. 'You promised, once, to befriend me. Oh, I know you will save him now,'

she said, putting her hands to her ears to shut out those horrible voices.

Mr. Reynolds stopped in his walk and took out his watch. 'As it is Miss Kauffmann's wish,' he answered in a matter-of-fact voice, turning to De Horn, 'it seems to me but fair I should tell you that I have appointed a magistrate to meet me here in half-an-hour, and that the door of the house is watched by two men in the street below.'

'*You* are a friend indeed,' cried old Kauffmann, coming back from the window, trembling and croaking, and thoroughly unnerved. 'Now you impostor! *Now* is our turn.'

'Tell me,' said Angel, walking straight up to De Horn, 'have you money to escape with? I have but ten pounds in the house.'

'Are you a mad woman?' cried her father. But Mr. Reynolds himself now interfered. 'I have brought money,' he said. 'I thought it might be wanted for a different purpose;' and then very stiffly, but not uncourteously, 'I know not, sir, by what name to address you, but if you will accept my advice, and act upon this lady's wishes, you will take this sum and leave the country at once and for ever. Count de Horn, whose name you have assumed, left for Sweden this morning; but, as I learned to-day, a secretary has remained behind with in-

structions to trace you and bring the authority of the law to bear on the offences of which you are accused.'

The shadows were lengthening, the minutes seemed like hours: for one long, long moment no one spoke.

Then De Horn came up to Angel. 'Remember that you have saved a lost soul,' he said, hoarsely. 'Henceforth I believe in utter goodness and generosity.' Then to Mr. Reynolds, 'You may call me by my real name, which is De Horn,' he said. 'My father gave me leave to bear it; my mother, Christine Brandt, is a servant in a village inn.'

They all looked at one another. Angelica was the first to move; she was listening with alarm to every sound. 'What is that? Now come,' said she, simply, taking his hand, then she led the way downstairs and through her father's bedroom into the flagged court behind the house. It was a smutty and dismal spot, from which a door in the wall led into a shed, through which there was an issue into a back alley; country fields and places were not far distant in those days from the very heart of London itself. And De Horn knew that he was safe. 'I can get home by the hatch between this and Russell Square,' he said.

'Don't go back to your lodgings,' said Angel. 'Take my advice: for my sake, for my peace of mind, fly at once.'

He lingered, looking up and down, and then with a

sort of burst, the words came at last. 'There is only one way by which I can show you my sincerity,' he said, 'but one way in which I can merit your forgiveness for the wrong I would have done,' he repeated. As he spoke he seemed some one else, whom Angelica had never seen before, some one almost common in tone, altered in manner, but stricken to truth and to reality of soul and feeling, not acting a part, but sincere in every breath and word. He looked at her with hard sad eyes; then he suddenly caught her tight in his arms. 'I can only prove to you my deep gratitude by never seeing you more,' he said. 'I have no words when I think that these are the last I shall ever speak to you.'

He pressed her to his heart, and before she could utter a word he was gone, running down the narrow alley. Some children were dancing in the sunset. She saw his long figure darting past them. He never looked back, he was gone. She crossed the shed and came into the stone court, and looked up at the windows of her own home: her old father was leaning out anxiously from her bedroom window, and the light fell on his grey hair, and some birds flew straggling across the sky, and all the phantoms of the last few years came to meet her.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SORROW'S KEENEST WIND.

One by one the spectators of this strange little tragedy took their leave as spectators do. The play being over, they returned to their own interests. All that evening Angel and her father sat by the fire in the studio silent, but not unmindful of each other's presence. Little Rosa was quietly playing in a corner alone. Angel held her father's horned old hand in her soft fingers.

They had had a long talk together; she had been quite open to him without disguise.

Those well-meant deceits, those agonising suppressions by which people try to save others from pain—are they worth the grief they occasion? Very often the sense of confidence and security far outbalances any pain of frankness and even of condemnation expressed.

A father does not utterly resent any misfortune, however greatly to be deplored, by which his daughter is doomed to remain at his side. John Joseph held the

pretty hand with its pointed fingers and looked at it with fatherly eyes.

'This is a painter's hand,' he said, with a kind little caressing tap. 'Where is thy cameo ring, Angel, that the Lady Ambassadress gave thee?'

'How can I tell you where it is?' said Angel, with a sudden burst of feeling. 'De Horn took it away; he did not give it back to me. How can I tell you where he is? How shall I ever know where he is again?' Her voice rang sadly shrill as she spoke.

The old man knew not what to say to comfort her; he could only mutely caress the poor little trembling hand.

Angelica felt that the truth had now been owned. Now there was no longer anything to conceal, and any truth faithfully faced is strength in itself.

She told herself, and she told the old man simply, that her life was spoiled, that she could not feel that vows spoken with all sincerity and seriousness were broken because circumstances had changed. She regretted it all, but there could be no change.

'If I had not been sincere in my feeling for that man, what excuse should I have had, father?' said she. 'It came to me suddenly; but it was no imagination. While he lives I shall ever feel bound to him. What excuse had I but my sincerity?'

So she spoke, but nevertheless Angel fell into a strange

indescribable state of morbid despair. Her nobler nature was no longer called upon to act; her commonplace, every-day self failed to endure the daily pricks and the stings of pity, of officious sympathy and half-concealed curiosity; she knew not how to bear it all.

If she had not prayed with all her heart for direction, she once said to herself, she could have better borne to be disgraced, to be ashamed of her actions, to be *branded*, so it seemed to her, for life.

And yet she only prayed to be helped to do right. She had not asked to be spared suffering.

Her prayer had not been so fruitless as she imagined. That for which they all blamed and pitied her, for which she blamed herself, reflecting the minds of those she trusted, was not perhaps all in her conduct which most deserved condemnation.

Her whole nature seemed changed. She who had once courted attention now shrank from notice with sensitive terror.

In after days she used to look back with strange pity and wonder at these sad and miserable times; but seen by the light of a brighter future, these old days looked different, nor could she ever quite remember their full depth of bitter dulness. Even to remember is scarcely possible, to put oneself back is sometimes a feat almost as difficult as to put oneself forward. Some one once showed me a drawing of Mendelssohn's. He had sketched

his friend's house in loving remembrance of the hours he had spent there. 'It is wonderfully accurate,' said the lady who had preserved the picture; 'but one window is misplaced; it is strange that, remembering it all so exactly, he should have been mistaken on this point.'

The windows of the past have a curious way of shifting. We look back at the stone walls which have enclosed our lives, and they seem one day to open. Perhaps after-lights break through and make a way. Perhaps the angels break in, as in that picture of Tintoretto's where the heavenly company bursts triumphant through the massive walls and becomes suddenly revealed to the astounded Mary.

Although Angelica shrank from any allusion to her trouble, old Kauffmann scarcely spoke on any other subject He would return to it again and again, entreat with tears and snuff to dissolve her marriage.

Then her agitation grew excessive. 'No, no,' she would say: she had no power to break such a tie.

'But the marriage is no marriage,' old Kauffmann would cry, exasperated, and appealing to Mr. Reynolds, their constant friend. 'Some one reads a service, there are no banns, no witnesses. The man had been married before. I, her father, am not consulted, the man disappears.'

'There *was* a licence,' said Mr. Reynolds, slowly. 'I

have taken counsel's opinion. The previous marriage could not be proved. With you, Catholics, the law is strict; but I have no doubt that by an appeal to Rome ——'

'I entreat you, dear father, dear Mr. Reynolds,' interrupted Angelica, with passionate emphasis, 'leave it, take no steps; you only give me more pain. I only ask to be left alone to bear my own burden, to injure no one else. Forget it all, father; I shall speak of it no more.'

And she kept her word; but though she did not speak she drooped, the blithe spirit was gone. Her friends were full of anxiety and solicitude. Lady Diana used to come day by day. Little Miss Reynolds used to arrive on tip-toe, slowly creaking the door-handle, as if a click of the latch would add or detract from poor Angelica's barrenness of heart. Everybody had a different prescription, but none reached her.

For some months Angelica Kauffmann seemed strangely altered: she had no word to utter, nothing to feel or to express. Such times come to all: night falls, the winter of our discontent covers and hushes the songs and perfumes and blooming garlands of summer-time. She had nothing more to say to anybody. She had said so much in so few words, felt so much in so few minutes, that now there seemed nothing left. She kept silence with her father; she would endure his solicitude in a

dogged, stupid sort of way. One day Lady Diana folded her in her arms in a sudden burst of indignation. 'My poor, poor friend!' she said. 'Yes,' Angel answered, 'and this is only the beginning: it gets worse and worse.'

'The low-born, knavish, insolent wretch!' cried Lady Diana, whose own pride had been curiously touched by the remembrance of past occurrences.

'You have a right to be angry,' said Angelica, blushing up angrily; 'but he *did* love me. I am not his superior in birth, he loved me; not you,' she repeated, with a strange bitter laugh. The laugh went on and then changed into a great flood of tears.

'You will see it differently some day,' said Lady Di; 'you do not remember how you have been insulted. Have you no dignity, no pride, to resent such treatment?'

'I think not,' said Angel, hanging her head and speaking in a hard and dogged tone. 'I am utterly and hopelessly disgraced. I see it in every face I meet. What use is there in speaking of it all? Nobody can understand me, and even you will not understand that I can have some sincerity of feeling in my heart.'

Her sorrow made her quite reckless of what she owed to other people, though not indifferent to their blame. It seemed to her as if all eyes were upon her.

It was not all imagination on Angelica's part when she thought that people were looking at her, counting her poor heart-throbs, scanning her lonely tears. She was a

well-known character. This curious romance crept abroad from one source and another. Gossip was better managed in those days than now, and persons of a larger mind were interested in the private details which then took the place of those public facts in which persons are now absorbed.

Mr. Reynolds was discreet in vain; it provoked him to hear the poor girl's name in every mouth. Wherever he went he was cross-questioned and re-cross-questioned. Some blamed, some laughed, all talked.

Lady Diana used to bite her lips with vexation. What cannot one or two good friends accomplish? The influence of this man and this woman worked wonders in Angel's behalf. Their steady friendship saved her from the ill opinion of many who were ready to accept the first version that was given to them, and who felt it incumbent upon them to judge, with or without facts to go upon. Lady Diana was most anxious to carry her friend away then and there to her own country-house in Hampshire, of which mention has been made. But Angelica seemed to have a nervous horror of any change, any effort. She refused all invitations; she could scarcely be persuaded to go out into the street.

One day, a long time before, a Mr. St. Leu, a barrister and art critic, had been speaking of some of Angelica's work to Mr. Reynolds. 'It is graceful,' the critic had said with a shrug, 'but overstrained and affected. Every-

thing is too *couleur de roseate-rose* for my plain common sense. I know the old father; a friend of his, M. Zucchi, an Italian, gave him a letter to me. The fair Angelica I have not seen; but her work does not attract me.'

'You have scarcely entered into her intention,' Mr. Reynolds had said, gravely. 'To her charming nature the whole world is a garden of happiness. She knows that sorrow exists. The wickedness of life—to us older people, it is, perhaps, the only real sorrow—does not seem to occur to her. Perhaps it might be better for her pictures if she had less confidence, but for herself it would not be so well,' said the painter.

One day, after poor Angel's tragedy, the two men met again by chance. 'How is your friend Miss Kauffmann?' the critic asked, in a different tone from that which he had formerly used. 'Poor lady! I fear her experience has been bitter enough to take the roses out of her garland for a long time to come. I am expecting a visit from her and her father at my chambers,' he continued; 'they are coming this afternoon, on business connected with the house they live in.'

Mr. St. Leu's staircase led from under the covered way that crosses from Inner Temple Lane. The staircase abuts upon a quaint wig-shop, that cannot be much altered since the days when Angelica looked in through the narrow panes at the blocks and the horsehair curls perched upon their shining cranes.

'I will wait for you here, father,' said she; 'it is out of the wind. I do not care to go up.' The nervous terror of meeting strangers was still upon her. She smiled to her father and went and stood in the one sheltered corner of this windy place, waiting by the wig-shop and leaning against the brick wall.

The colonnade divides two pretty old courts, with many bricks, with lawyers and blue bags issuing from old door-ways; red, and brown, and grey are the tints; quaint and slight the arches and peristyles, to some minds as quaint and graceful in their mists and wreathing fogs as any flaunting marble or triumphant Pompeian vista. For a long time Angel watched the passers-by; listened to the sound of the footsteps. It was a bitter day for all its spring promise: a fog hung over the streets, the wind came dry and dusty, piercing through the damp mist. Angelica waited, indifferent to it all; the weather made little difference to her in her strange depression.

Would anything ever touch her again? she wondered. It seemed to her as if even trouble could not come near her any more. It is true that interest itself fails at times, and that life is then very saltless and ashy to the taste; but even this is a part of life's experience, if honestly accepted. Angel waited, listlessly watching two children descending and climbing the steps of a piled brown house

with a slim classic doorway. Other people were living on, progressing, and working to some end. She had no end, nothing to wish for. Feeling the utter hopelessness of it all, she could see no way out of it, no possible issue.

She had never taken into consideration that tide which flows and ebbs, that alternate waking and sleeping which belong to all living emotion. If our hearts did not beat with alternate pulses, they would not be alive.

The children were gone, a lawyer's clerk had paced the court and dwindled away. (I don't know if lawyers' clerks looked as old and worn a hundred years ago as they do now.)

One big old man, dressed in loose untidy clothes went slowly past, blinking at her from beneath a small scratch wig that scarce covered his big head; he rolled as he walked along, portly, unsightly. There was a certain stamp of arbitrary dignity about him for all his shabby clothes and uncouth gestures. Angelica recognised the face and strange actions, for she had seen Mr. Johnson one evening at the play; that evening when Garrick acted Hamlet.

She shrank away from his steady gaze. He passed on, and went up the staircase by which her father had just climbed. Then more smoke-coloured figures went by with the misty minutes. Then by degrees the place became quite silent and deserted, except for certain

ghosts of her own fancy, and drifts of smoke and soot, and an odd jumble of recollections.

Angel sighed, from present chill depression as much as from any other cause. Some stir of pain seemed awakened suddenly; a sort of unreasonable retrospective sense of shame and grief came over her, and caused her to hide her face in her two hands for an instant

CHAPTER XXX.

IN PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS.

It was in that instant that a heavy step creaked down the narrow staircase, fell on the stones, came to her side, and stopped.

'Yes, father!' she said, without looking up.

'Your father is above with Mr. St. Leu,' said a voice.

It was not John Joseph's vibrating tenor, but a deep and measured tone she did not know; and then Angelica raised her eyes, and met the full and steady look of two bleared heavy orbs, from which, nevertheless, a whole flooding light of sympathy and kindness seemed to flow. The ugly seamed face was tender with its great looks of pity.

'You are Mrs. Kauffmann,' said the man in this voice, with a sort of echo 'I told your father I would stay with you, my dear, until he had finished his business. I have wished to make your acquaintance,' he continued, after a moment's pause. 'I know to what straits we

poor human creatures can be brought, and I confess that the recital of your story has moved me greatly.'

There he stood still looking at her, and she timidly glanced at the lazy well-known figure, at the heavy face with the indomitable fire of light in it, the lamp burning through the bushel and darting its light into one heart and another; Johnson's looks no less than his words carried that conviction which is the special gift of some people.

Angelica, who had of late so shrunk from strangers, felt as if this was a friend to whom she could complain; to whom it was possible to speak.

'What do you mean?' she cried impetuously (her tongue seemed suddenly unloosed). 'Who do you take me for? Do you know my story? It is only foolery and disgrace. People look at me—not, as you do, with kindness—no, I see their scorn; I feel their importunate curiosity, and know not how to escape from it all, from myself, my miserable life——'

'Hush, my dear; hush!' said this stranger. 'There is no wisdom in useless and hopeless sorrow: although, somehow, it is so like virtue at times that he who is wholly without it cannot be loved by me, at least. To be ill thought of in another person's mind is in itself no wrong-doing, although it may signify some discomfort to yourself. But believe me, my dear young lady,' said the

wise old man, 'the world is not so scornful as you imagine; so unjust as it is peevishly represented. For my own part,' he went on, 'I love and respect you, disgraced, as you call it; whereas before, there was a time when my sympathy was less. You have done no wrong; you have injured yourself, but no other person. In some ways disappointment is as good as success, for it does not prevent the sincerity of your good intentions, nor alter the truth of your feelings. To be mistaken is no crime. Many things turn out differently from our wishes. Can you follow me, my dear? Nay, you must not cry; you must not lose courage. A lifetime is still before you, and much hope for the future.'

He took her languid hand, and held it between his big palms. He comforted her strangely, though she scarcely owned it to herself, or knew how this strange help reached her.

'Hope!' cried poor Angel. 'What hope can there be for me? I know not how to escape my thoughts. I know not whom to trust, whom to love, what to do.'

'Love your enemies; do good to them that ill use you,' said the old man, solemnly. 'Follow your own sense of right. Fear not to love, my dear. Fear hate and mistrustful feelings. Fear the idleness of grief; accept the merciful dispensation of Providence, which, by the necessity of present attention, diverts us from

being lacerated by the past. It still remains for you to contemplate the future without undue confidence, but without unnecessary alarm, and with humble trust in your own efforts for right doing, to determine upon the best, the most reasonable course for a Christian to pursue, and to follow that course with courage and humility.'

Some people have a gift of magnetism, of personal influence, which is quite indescribable, which belongs partly to the interest they take in the concerns of others, partly to some natural simplicity and elevation of soul.

Johnson's personality and great-hearted instinct reaches us still across the century that divides us from its convincing strength. What must that tender, dogmatic, loving help have been to poor little Angelica in her perplexity, as she found herself face to face with this human being, so devout and wise and tender in his sympathy.

Now at last she seemed to have found an ark, a standing-place in her sea of trouble. She looked up into the heavy face. She seemed to breathe more fully; the load upon her heart was lightened, and with a burst of tears she stooped and kissed the great brown hand.

'Oh!' she said, 'you have spoken words that I shall never forget. Heaven sent you to me. I almost feel as if I could face my life again.'

The poor little thing's nerves had been over-wrought, over-strung all this long time. It seemed to her now, as

if this man had taken her hand, and led her calmly to the encounter of terrors and alarms which she had not dared to face alone, and which vanished as she met them.

When John Joseph came down after his long conference with Mr. St. Leu he found Angelica brightened, smiling through tears. His old Angel was come back, with a softened light in her eyes and a sweetened tone in her voice.

'Father, how long you have been!' she said. 'Not too long, not one moment too long! If you could know what this half hour has done for me!'

It had done this—it had restored her self-respect, her confidence in others.

John Joseph rubbed his hands, seeing her look of life renewed. The slight figure drifted less languid, more erect. There was hope in her steps. They passed out into the busy street, under Temple Bar, into the noisy haunts of men.

Angel's friend rolled off on his ungainly way. He was grateful and cheered himself, for to bless is in itself the blessing of some generous hearts.

As she went along Angelica once more remembered the priest and the text carved upon the stone in the cloister at Verona. But this was no stony oracle carved to order; this was a living word, one spoken for her alone, one that came home to her and kindled her sad heart.

When Angelica reached her house again that day

everything seemed to be changed. So much can one person sometimes do for another. Mr. Johnson's confidence seemed to have touched some secret spring in her heart. She set to work again with renewed courage. Resolve and patient endeavour came to her aid. Everything seemed possible again, even without the spring of hope.

Some days, utterly dry and parched, she worked on from habit, hoping that the sap of interest was not quite crushed within her. At others, strung to happier measure, she seemed to be uplifted, to be able to put her care away. She had never painted better in her life than now, orders came in rapidly, and she was obliged to defer the long-talked-of visit to Lowdenham Manor, Lady Diana's house in Hampshire.

People are made up of so many contradictory feelings, that when a person's conduct surprises us we forget how much circumstances have to do with the outward aspect of life. As the material facts change, the motive forces seem to turn into fresh channels; but it is the same force or weakness of character that drives the impulse. Angelica Kauffmann was a woman born to be a slave, easily influenced by stronger wills, but still more by her stubborn ideas of sentiment.

One trying ordeal was still before her; it was but meeting with an old tried friend. We mortals are very impatient beings, and we seem to have some instinct by which we often make bad matters worse, far worse than they need

be. Antonio added to poor Angelica's troubles by his return, by his utter and indignant sympathy. When he saw her looking unhappy, his grief for her trouble seemed to turn against her in its very intensity. They met in the street one day; he was on his way to see her. She had been listlessly strolling in the sunshine with little Rosa, and they were standing by the railings at the corner of the square, when they saw him crossing the street. He, too, looked worn and harassed, although he had come straight from sweet golden groves and perfumed skies. He had received a strange summons to Windsor immediately on his return, and was just come back from thence. He had found bad news enough waiting his return to put out perfumes and southern lights for days to come.

He did not speak at first when Angel gave him her languid hand: she was frightened by his manner.

'When did you come?' she faltered.

He was silent for a little bit, trying to span the gulf which had opened between them. He was unreasonable, indignant, angry with her, with fate.

She looked at him at last with her steady eyes. The look made him speak, though at one time in his anger against her he had thought all words were over between them for ever.

'I came yesterday,' he said. 'I found a letter calling me to Windsor. There is sad news there. I must return

thither. I scarcely thought of seeing you, but I could not keep away.'

'Why should you keep away because I am in trouble?' said Angel, leading the way across the street to her house, of which the door was on the latch, and flitting upstairs before him into her studio. She went up to her easel from habit, untied her hood; it fell upon the floor at her feet. She waited for her friend to speak.

Angelica seemed to him crushed, altered in looks, made dull somehow. She did not hold up her head, but stood looking before her with vacant eyes. Angelica! was this Angelica? It was not so much that she looked ill and changed; but some sharpness had come into her face, some dull cloud into her glancing blue eyes, some expression of distaste and weariness, that Antonio had never seen before. It cut him to the heart. His grief made him unjust. He began to pace the room in a sort of fury, then turned and came straight back to her.

'Unhappy girl,' he cried, 'what have you done?'

His melting voice, restrained by his grief for her trouble, seemed to pass over her as a wave of salt bitterness, and as he reproached her the two seemed drawn together more nearly again.

'What madness befell you?' he cried. 'Did you forget your father and all who love you? Oh! Angelica what have you done?'

And his eyes brimmed over with tears, and he stooped and took her hand and kissed it with a tender respect which belied his words.

'You would have done better if you had married me,' said Antonio with a sort of groan. 'I who went away because I thought it hopeless, and, fool that I was, could not consent to follow in your train as so many others had done. I had rather you had died. O Angelica!' he cried, in a tone of such true sorrowful part in her sorrow that Angel, who had been angry and cold and indignant, now suddenly began to cry; and the tears did them both good.

'You know I did love him, Antonio, and sometimes I think I do love him still,' she said.

He might have raged again, but for her tears and sorrow of heart.

'Perhaps I am not married,' she said, wiping her tears, 'but when I took those vows upon me I was sincere. Now let me at least fulfil that which I engaged to do. I should not know one moment's peace if I went against my feeling. As it is, I have a certain peace—a feeling of self-respect, which helps me. I must make up to my father for all I made him suffer, and I must accept my life as it comes to me. Not the happiest lot, indeed, but a tolerable one compared to some,' said Angel, taking Antonio's hand. 'I have the blessing of constant occu-

pation. It wearies me at times, and I have sometimes envied those whose life did not depend upon their toil; but on the whole I would not have it otherwise. We are friends, are we not?' she added, in her old girlish voice; 'I want my friend Antonio more than I ever did. I think I shall know better how to value him.'

But all the same, they were parted for a long long time. Antonio felt too deeply to be able to look on calmly, to meet John Joseph with patience. He could do no good; he seemed to re-open her wounds by his sympathy. It was no use that he should stay, so he felt. One day he went to Mr. Reynolds. It was some comfort to rail at fate in the company of another who had suffered also in some measure. He asked Mr. Reynolds question upon question. Once he lost his temper, and flew out with a burst of anger at the calm demeanour of the unruffled master.

'Forgive my importunity,' he said, recollecting himself with an effort; 'she is my dearest, oldest friend. I have been almost beside myself, and I ask myself, as if in a cruel dream, whether it can be true.'

'I am afraid it is too true,' said Mr. Reynolds, gravely. 'It is most unfortunate, most distressing.'

Antonio turned pale and faint. His nerves were not of the same equal poise as the great painter's, and he

could not face the ruin of his friend's life without the acutest physical suffering.

Mr. Reynolds continued calmly: 'You may rely on me for leaving no stone unturned to release her from this unfortunate entanglement; only her consent is necessary, and this she absolutely refuses.'

'She is mad!' cried Zucchi. 'What does she mean?'

'No one can deplore her strange infatuation more than I do,' said Mr. Reynolds, gravely. 'She considers herself married, and refuses to be set free. I myself have tried in vain to convince her of her mistake.'

Antonio gave an odd flashing glance at his companion; then he hastily took leave and hurried away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT LOWDENHAM MANOR.

We have seen Angelica in such saddened straits of late that it is a satisfaction to turn a page and find her in pleasant pastures again.

It was evening, and they had all been sitting silent in the drawing room: Miss Reynolds in her corner by the window; Lady Diana was working at the table; and Angelica, poor Angelica!—she, too, had been at work, but her hands had fallen into her lap, and she sat watching the drops, the green lawn, with its little furnaces of geraniums. The water did not seem to extinguish these flames; it seemed, on the contrary, to feed and stimulate their fires. The room was faded and becabineted, but Lady Diana had been content to leave it as she had found it, with the great china pot with last summer's rose leaves, and other relics of its late possessors. It was Angelica who had plucked two jars-full of china roses, and who had brought in a great burning gladiola bursting

from its stem. Its red head was reflected in the convex looking-glass.

I don't know how long they had sat silent. The silence seemed to grow as the minutes went by. It had begun, as most silences do, by a word, best left unsaid.

'I hoped Lord Henry would have ridden over again to call on us,' Miss Reynolds had said. 'I don't know that we ladies are not better without him; but he talked to Angelica of coming to see how we were all getting on.'

'I am sure he will come,' said Angelica, 'for he promised——for he told me the last time——'

'What should he come for?' said Lady Diana, quickly. She looked up so stern and so abruptly that Angelica gave a little start. 'Why did you make him promise to come again?'

'It was his own proposal, not mine,' said Angelica, wearily. 'I want no company but that which I have,' she said. And then came the silence.

Angelica could hardly have told you herself how the days went by at Lowdenham Manor. The distant murmur of the sea reached them from time to time, the days were green and still and even in their progress. Even the mid-day glares came shadowed and softened through the clouding branches. On most sides rose green hills, fringed and heaped with green bushes. Here

a cow would be grazing high in the air, it seemed, climbing over the top of the elm-trees. The blue smoke of some cottage chimney would be spiring from some deeper hollow, spreading, melting, vanishing delicately away. Everything seemed subdued and mellowed. The very tree stems were softly wound with ivy sprays. The old orchard walls were lined with lichen, as were the branches of the heavy fruit-trees. The ponds lay clear, reflecting the greens and gentle blues and lilacs of the landscape. The bushes were overflowing with convolvuluses flowering white. It seemed to Angelica like a place hidden in the heart of a labyrinth to which they had come winding by green lanes.

Angelica felt safe, peaceful here, far away from the world of doubt and sorrow in which she had been living so long.

Here by degrees a silent understanding seemed to have arisen between the poor tired woman and the sweet inanimate world to which a kind fate had brought her for sympathy and comfort. In proportion to the very pain she had suffered now came ease and peace, and a sense of it and of unspoken beauty. Alone here was not alone: everything seemed too sweet and full of life, of natural affinities, of utter and completing loveliness. De Horn, as she called him to herself, had travelled far out of her life. Angelica had no interest or part in his world,

and yet she believed that through all his wrong-doing and his cruel deceit he had loved her truly; and, thinking of this, she felt as if she had no need to forgive.

Lady Diana's friend, Mrs. Damer, came over while Angelica was at the manor house; and it was here that the Kauffmann painted that charming portrait which is in Miss Johnston's possession, of a person whose name has since become more famous than it deserved. Anne Conway was now the wife of Mr. Dawson Damer, the man of the hundred waistcoats.

Angelica finished the portrait in London, and the Kauffmann and her model used to have many a discussion as they sate over their work. One day Reynolds came in, and found them in hot debate.

'Surely,' cried Mrs. Damer, 'surely an impression, however conveyed, is more valuable to the artist than mere imitation. I can often work better and more rapidly from my own mental recollections than by merely copying something which does not after all represent my idea.'

Here the painter overcame the man of the world. 'My dear young lady, that is precisely what I must ask leave to contradict (if you will forgive the liberty). With all your great gifts, your sweet impulsive industry, and admirable feeling, it is only the study of Nature that can give any of us that mastery which we must all desire.

Rules are no trammels to those who are working in the right direction.'

'You mean that in Art, as in other things,' said Angelica, blushing, 'it is by submitting most completely to the laws of truth that we best discover her intentions? Do you know,' she went on, 'I seem sometimes to have found out of late that obedience is best? Now as I am painting, the more completely I can obey the colour of your beautiful brown hair, the better my likeness will be.'

And in truth Angelica never produced a better picture than this charming portrait of the young lady in her white dress, with hands clasped full of flowers, and dark hair piled above a pale high-bred face. Mr. Reynolds praised the portrait heartily. He had a special reason for being anxious that Angelica should do credit to herself and her talent at this time.

'But there are two ways of seeing things,' cried Mrs. Damer, persisting. 'If you only copied the signs without interpreting them, I am certain your pictures, Mr Reynolds, would be vastly different to what they are, deficient in the grand air, which so especially belongs to them.

'Sometimes we are happy in our subjects, and they inspire us,' said the painter, courteously. 'But I fear, madam, that I must hold to my guiding principle, and

seek for a calm and even pursuit of facts as they appear to me.'

'Ah, you are right,' said Angelica, with some emotion. 'Let us be calm,' she cried, excitedly. 'Let us work and live tranquil and unshaken by the storms of passionate endeavour, thankful that we have true friends to guide us, to help us on the right way.'

Mr. Reynolds was greatly touched by her sudden appeal.

'You, of all people,' he said, 'have the right to count upon your friends; and it is not only upon friendship,' he said, very kindly. 'Are you prepared for distinction?' he asked, smiling.

'What do you mean, Mr. Reynolds?' said Angel.

'I mean that never was there an age in which art flourished under more enlightened patrons or with more charming disciples,' said Mr. Reynolds, with a bow to the wondering ladies. But he would not say more, nor could they guess to what he was alluding.

CHAPTER XXXII.

TO SHOW FALSE ART WHAT BEAUTY WAS OF YORE.

With all his quietness of nature, Reynolds could ill brook opposition. Noisy dissension was to him intolerable. The Society of Amalgamated Artists had existed for many years; but its spirit was not that to which the tranquil Reynolds inclined. Anger, jealousies, dissensions seemed to him as blasphemies against the creed they all professed The society had a way of selecting first one and then another victim for suspicion and persecution. At one of their annual meetings they deliberately excluded sixteen of their best members from the council. A certain number of those who remained immediately resigned their posts. Ill-feeling was great. Mr. Moser was accused by some; others defended him. The result of it all was a proposal for instituting a new society, and during Reynolds' absence in Paris the scheme grew and gained ground. Moser, Chambers, and West waited on the King, with propositions and outlines for new academies of arts to be instituted in London.

When Mr. Reynolds returned from abroad he found the whole thing in train. The officers were named, a great meeting was convened. West came to request his presence at Mr. Wilton's house, where a certain number of painters were then assembled. Reynolds, it is said, hesitated and delayed. Whether from accident or purpose, tea was served an hour later than usual, and when he and his young companion reached the house at last, the meeting was on the point of dispersing. When the door opened and the two came in, they were received (says Northcote) with a sudden burst of acclamation, and Reynolds was with one voice proclaimed President of the New Academy. Cannot one picture the scene? The bursts of genuine enthusiasm with which those who have the generous gift of divination hail the rulers among the people have always seemed to me among the most affecting incidents in life. Reynolds was touched and overcome by this sudden revelation of good will and good sympathy. From the Court he had received but small token of praise hitherto, but this was worth far more than any flare of fashionable adulation or success. This was the irrepressible tribute of workers like himself, who knew and understood the value of the laurels they bestowed from their own store.

Mr. Reynolds walked into Angelica's studio that night after the meeting. Little Rosa had fallen asleep in one

of the big chairs. The faithful lamp was burning dim, the log was smouldering on the hearth, the room was warm and silent, the atmosphere serene. Angelica had opened her instrument and had been singing some snatches of Mozart, to whose music her German soul responded. That tender melody between tears and laughter seemed at times to speak all the doubts and certainties of her indefinite life.

The song ended not in a chord, but in Mr. Reynolds, who came in to her music, breaking into the last few notes. 'I have been very much moved to-night,' he said, 'so much so that I came over here, dear lady, to see if your windows were alight, and if you had not a gleam of sympathy for a friend in your kind heart;' and then he told her in a few words what had happened to him.

It was a happiness to Angelica to listen to his story, and she made him tell her again and again what had been done, promising absolute secresy for the moment. But there are hours when sympathy is not always at command for those who can claim no hand to grasp their fortunes, no special ear to listen to their story. In the midst of their *tête-à-tête* the door opened, and old John Joseph came in, ushering another belated visitor—no less a person than Lord Henry, of whom mention has been made.

'Here is a gentleman who wants to consult you, my Angelica,' said old Kauffmann, without seeing Mr. Rey-

nolds; and Lord Henry, with his conquering airs, advanced in all his usual confidence.

Mr. Reynolds soon took his leave. He had wanted her to hear what had befallen him, and she had listened with sweet looks and interest. Now he must give up his place in turn.

'Pass on, pass on,' says Fate to Mr. Reynolds. 'This was your will; pass on, pass on.'

The next time when Mr. Reynolds called upon Angelica, Lord Henry was also there; but the painter left him to Lady Diana, who was sitting for her picture, dressed in blue satin on a supposed lawn with a parrot, a puppy, and all the little W.'s in a group round her chair. (There is a charming picture by Angelica of the Duchess of Argyll of those days, so depicted, in a family group. It belongs to the lady, the possessor of the Damer portrait, and is in the style which Zoffany has made famous.)

Angelica came forward wondering what new honour had come to her friend. He looked pleased and greatly excited, held a paper in his hand; it was the list of the names of the new Academicians.

'See!' said he, smiling and pointing with his finger. 'Can you read the list of the new Academicians?' and she read 'President, *Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt.*,' and as she looked up with bright congratulation the finger travelled on, '*William Hoare, Nathaniel Hone*,' Angelica

tead; and then with a pleased exclamation and blush she came to her own name and that of *Mary Moser*, to which the friendly finger was pointing. It travelled steadily to the very bottom of the page. 'Here is also your friend Mr. Zucchi's name,' said Mr. Reynolds.

It was a moment of unalloyed delight. Angelica clapped her hands; Lady Diana came down from her perch; Lord Henry advanced from the other end of the room affable and radiant (he had also won an unexpected prize that day), and he asked to see the list, which he perused with deep interest. I believe some vague hope had suddenly occurred that his own name might have been included in it, and that this additional honour might have been laid by him at Lady Diana's feet.

In Zoffany's picture we can see the Academicians as they were in life. They are all depicted with their wigs and their tights and their dignities. Sir Joshua with his sword, the model in his place upon the steps, the earnest faces of the groups standing in conclave. Here is art. Here is ceremony and nature too. Two very forbidding ladies also present are hanging in effigy on the wall These are the female Academicians, in one of whom it is difficult to recognise the lovely original of Sir Joshua's portrait of Angelica Kauffmann. In 1768 women's rights were a willing concession to their desert, not, as in later years, an extorted and a graceless boon.

The figures of the men of those days, as Zoffany has

left them, impress one somehow by a certain appearance of manly self-respect. The military costume of the age may have given a martial air to these peaceful warriors. There is a little drawing of Stothard's, fanciful, vivid, and delicate, in which we can peep at the Academy for that year, with the people who are looking at the pictures as they hang in their places on the wall.

There is the beautiful Duchess of Manchester fresh from the artist's studio.* There are landscapes smiling, ships sailing, big wigs, and bands gracing the walls. There is a traveller bearded and turbaned, perhaps out of compliment to the great Lady Hester of that time. The pretty dainty figures of the visitors trip across the floor, high nod their plumed head gears, brightly sparkle the buckled shoes. The young King gazes through his glass. The court lady holds her slim fan. The old

* '*The arts unrivalled shall remain, while George protects the polished train*,' seems to have been the chorus of those days. There are some curious details of George the Third and his patronage of literature and the arts in the lectures upon the Georges from which I am quoting. He wished to establish an 'Order of Minerva, for literary and scientific characters. The knights were to take rank after the Knights of the Bath, and wear a straw-coloured ribbon and star of sixteen points. There was such an outcry among the *literati* as to who should be appointed that the plan was given up, and Minerva and her star never came down among us.' Another note tells us that the king objected to painting St. Paul's, as Popish practice. 'Accordingly,' says the note, 'the most clumsy heathen sculpture only decorate that edifice at present. It is fortunate that the paintings were spared, for never was painting and drawing so unsound as at that time. It is far better for our eyes to contemplate whitewash (when we turn them away from the parson) than to look at Opie's patchy canvases or Fuseli's livid monsters.'

cocked-hat gentleman is absorbed in his own portrait, perhaps painted by young Lawrence; or by the great Gainsborough of Bath.

Angelica too sends her work; she clings to her classical models. Her Hector and Andromache are much admired, so is a composition representing Venus directing Æneas and Achates. The gods and the Greeks and Romans continue to rule from Golden Square. Lemprière comes to life as we read the list.

In many and many an Academy did Angelica exhibit the works of her unremitting hands, her designs and her portraits. Gods and heroes, Olympus in every attitude, in good work, in bad work, and indifferent, still she laboured on.

The woman lived year by year, her youth passed; neither prosperity, sunshine, nor the winter storms of lonely regret could change her nature. She was happy and sorrowful, as others are. She responded to the calls of the children piping in the market, to the cry of the mourner, to the song of those who rejoice. She was no mighty heroine, but she tried to be true to herself; what more can we ask of any human being? She was tender to her father, faithful to her convictions, loving to her friends, and ready to their call.

Antonio heard of her at one time in the constant company of Lord Henry, that artistic soul, and he uttered

some biting sarcasms, for which he was sorry almost as he spoke.

He had seen but little of her all these years. For his own peace of mind he felt it best to keep away. He lived much alone, occupied by his art, esteemed and respected by those few with whom he consorted. His health was delicate, and a strange and sad vexation, which has no place here, but which concerned one of the kind young ladies he had known so intimately (poor Kitty, who died of some secret grief, people said), made him morbidly averse to all women's society.

One day Lord Henry's marriage was announced. It took the town by surprise. Lady W. had become more and more complicated, her sensibilities were almost unendurable, and she had discovered at last that even Lord Henry could not understand them. They quarrelled, and poor Diana bore the brunt, and tried in vain to explain the mysterious misunderstanding. Lord Henry, in his distress, found in her unselfish nature and warm, kind heart a clue to the shadowy tangle. Her tenderness touched some genuine feeling in the little Maccaroni, who chose to confide in Angelica, and to be encouraged by her to hope. The romance had begun at Lowdenham, but it was not until that very day, when Angelica read her name upon the list of the Academicians, that Lady Diana accepted Lord Henry's offer.

Meanwhile Angelica lived on alone and at work, not

unhappy, as I have said, although days and hours came when life seemed long to her, as to most people.

Rossi, who loses no opportunity of praising his friend, tells us that Angelica, besides her various accomplishments, was also a woman of literary tastes and wide experience. Klopstock and Gessner were among her correspondents. Later in life we know how Goethe wrote of 'that tender soul.' 'When she read any noble historical anecdote,' says her biographer, 'her face would brighten, her placid eyes would acquire a surprising vivacity. You could note in her speaking countenance all the passion, all the sublimity of the author.'

Angelica had saved some money in all these long years She had paid two visits to Ireland, and come back cheered and enriched. There is a mention of her dining in good company at Dr. Baker's house. The Hornecks and Reynolds are there, and Goldsmith writes of

> The Kauffmann beside,
> And the jessamy bride . . .

There are troubles in all estates, and Angel did not escape hers, notwithstanding all the help of friends and the sympathy which came to her. One painful incident we read of, which vexed her father greatly at the time, and which added to his old trouble about leaving her unprotected and alone. Even little Rosa was gone now, for she married at seventeen, and the father and daughter were alone in the old house.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AND SO FAREWELL.

TEN years pass very slowly, very quickly too. The horizon widens, our hopes grow fainter and more fixed, our possessions increase, diffuse into distant points—possessions that have waxed and grown and filled our hearts. Some have extinguished hope in a reality far dearer than any visions. As time goes on we find out our narrow fetters, we discover our gifts, we learn how much we can bear, how long we can wait, how much we can forgive, how much forgiveness we need from others.

Angelica was coming back to Lowdenham Court once more. She was the same woman, with the same preoccupations that she had brought ten years before. She was older—that was all. She had been sorry and faithful and at work a little longer. Her pictures, alas! were not wonderfully better, though now and then some happy chance, some fortunate subject, resulted in a charming work that did the painter credit. She had her father still. He wore his old cloak that scarce looked shabbier. Want was no longer at their door. Long, long

ago she had repaid the money Lady Diana lent her. Lady Diana was now a poor woman, comparatively speaking, for her husband had many expensive tastes and long-accumulated debts, which, however, did not greatly affect the happiness of a very united home. It was a real happiness to Angelica to see her friend in her home with her children round her. Some look of peaceful animation had come into Lady Di's dull face, some brightening of maternal pride into those two pale eyes.

It had been an old promise that the Kauffmanns should spend some days with Lord Henry and Lady Diana. Angelica had been detained in London by one thing and another, and she and her father found themselves belated on the way. The coach had set them down at the nearest market-town, and now they came driving through the darkness, scarcely knowing whither they were going, through dim fragrances and vanishing lights and murmurs of overarching trees. The horses went slowly, stumbling up the steep lanes blazing with stars. The great stars that night seemed dropping heavily from the high heavens and flashing to meet the cool, dark earth; then from the lanes they came into chillier regions, wild commons, shivering with invigorating breezes. Angelica sat, half-asleep, watching the horses' drowsy progress, dimly absorbing the suggestions of the new country—the visions passing by. Those of her brain seemed almost more vivid than the realities, now that the last lights of sunset

had died away beyond the hills. She had gone back to the past in some vague undefined way; some vague far-distant call seemed to reach her now and then. When they stopped at last they could hear the cool roar of a torrent below, and then Angelica woke up and John Joseph shivered and sighed. 'Father, are you ill?' she said. 'Is anything amiss?'

'What should be amiss?' he answered, hastily, and as he spoke he patted her hand. Angelica thought his tone was strange; but they had started off once more, and once more came visions mingling with the indistinct charm of the present; voices that she had heard long ago seemed speaking and awakening her from one dim, delicious dream to another.

They seemed to be journeying under the great torrent of stars that swept the heavens. Once or twice Angelica thought she could hear the distant note of the sea sounding through all these vague perfumes and mysteries.

'Are you asleep, Angelica?' said old Kauffmann, suddenly. 'Are you warm, my child—will you share my cloak? I have—I have been dreaming,' he said. 'Give me your hand. Ah! I can still hold it. Some day there will be only the old cloak left to shield my child. Angelica, I often long to be back in the tranquil old places, to hear the horns of the goatherds at Morbegno. I think I could live a little longer there; and, my child, I dread death.

Thou, who art so easily led, so ill able to judge—ah! it breaks my heart to leave thee alone.'

He shed a few tears and wiped his eyes with a corner of his cloak. Then he began talking again rather excitedly about Italy, about his longing for warmth, for a little peace and ease before the end.

'Let us go there, father,' said Angelica, absently. 'Why should we not go?'

'How can you and I, an old man and a weak woman, go alone all that long way?' cried John Joseph, pettishly.

'Dearest,' said Angelica, 'do not talk in this sad way. Do not fear me. I know life now; and I know myself,' she said, a little shrilly. 'There is Bonomi, that good fellow, to advise.'

'Bonomi!' said old Kauffmann; 'he only dreams of Rosa from six in the morning until sixteen at night. Bonomi is no companion for my Angelica. You need a wiser, older man to rely upon; one mature in spirit, tried in affection, my child. Cannot you think of some one whom we have known for long years and proved an honourable, upright man?'

'Are you speaking of Antonio?' said Angelica, quietly. They had reached the end of the hill; a great sight of stars and purple blackness seemed to overflood beyond the line of the horizon. The driver climbed his seat and cracked his whip; the horses started at a swift gallop.

Again old Kauffmann sighs and shifts uneasily; some-

thing has been in his mind all day which he has not yet had the courage to break to his daughter.

'I am afraid you are tired, father,' said she.

'They will find me changed, greatly changed, Angelica,' he answered, very dolefully; 'broken in body, ill in mind. Time was when a little journey such as this would not have wearied me. Time passes; quickly comes an end to strength. Who will take care of you, my child?' he repeated, wistfully.

'Hush, father,' said Angelica, putting her own arms round him. 'We shall soon be at our journey's end.'

'We are travelling to different places, Angelica,' the old man said, solemnly. 'I think I could go to my rest in peace, if I left you in some good man's care. Otherwise I know not how to die—that is the truth. How to leave you alone in this great world.' And he looked about him, at the night, the mysterious valley, the lights twinkling in the distance.

'Oh, father,' said Angelica, faltering, 'would it make you happy if I were to marry? How can I marry? You know it is impossible. You, who know——' She clung closer and closer to him. The thought of parting from him came for the first time with a bitter, piercing pang that she could not escape.

Old Kauffmann had worked himself up into one of his nervous states of agitation; he had not yet said all that was in his mind. 'My child, I had not meant to speak to

you to-night of what I have heard,' he said; 'but why should I delay? Sooner or later you must face a terrible memory.' He took her hand. 'You think yourself still bound,' he said, solemnly. 'But you are free. That unfortunate man is no more. As I left home a letter came to me from the village doctor who attended his last moments. It is signed by the priest. He is dead. A gastrite complicated by symptoms of heart-disease carried him off after a few weeks' illness.' Then the old man's voice failed, and he began to cry.

He scarcely knew what he was saying, or what his daughter answered. All the stars were sinking in the black sky, the shadows passing like ghosts. All her past was pressing upon her, suffocating her, with strange reaction rolling up from the shadowy plains, resounding with the far-away moan of the sea.

It seemed but that minute that she had parted from De Horn, from the man whose ring she wore. 'Dead, father?' she repeated.

'Yes, he is dead at last, my child,' John Joseph answered.

'Ah! hush!' she screamed so strangely that the driver looked back, thinking she had called him. It was not grief she felt, it was not relief, it was scarcely emotion, it was a vivid, awe-stricken sense of the man's presence. Time was not. She heard the voice, saw the dark-cut face with its rigid lines. It was a recognition—not a

death, but a sudden life, after this long and unbroken separation. It was wonder and emotion, and then a great burst of tears came at last to recall her to herself.

A few minutes more and they were passing through the old gates and pine avenues that led to Lowdenham Manor. Then came the dazzle of lights in the hall, and the cordial voice of Lady Diana greeting the travellers; hands to help them from their high perch: wine, warmth, exclamations—how wearied they looked! what had happened?

'My dear creatures, you seem half-dead both of you,' cries Lady Di. 'Angelica, is anything the matter?'

'I have just had some bad news,' said Angelica, 'which has moved me very much.'

Lady Diana asked no more; led her friend to her own room, kissed her, and left her in quiet, and then Angel shut the door, fastened it close, and once more tears came to her relief, and she sobbed as if her heart would break. Some of her tears were grief, but others also flowed because grief was not. Grief was dead. It had died long years before.

Coming back across the field next day, with Lady Diana and her children, Angelica met her father pottering in the autumn sunshine, and limping slowly along the stubble path. He seemed in some excitement; he told Angelica that Antonio had been with him at the manor.

'He has come, do you hear? He is staying at the village inn, my lady,' said John Joseph; 'he has brought our letters. He has seen the Bonomis,' continued the old man. 'Rosa is well and happy. Her husband has a good order. Oh, my lady, what a loss little Rosa is in our house! Some day you will have to part with your darlings; but to part is happiness compared to the misery of leaving one's children alone unsheltered from the storm.'

They had reached a little sunny bench arched with hawthorn sticks and midday shadows, where bronzed leaves and autumnal berries made a canopy against the rays. They all sat down to rest, facing wide fields and breathing the sunny and corn-scented air. The water sparkled; there came a lowing of Alderney cows. A little baby bull was pawing the ground and sending flying clouds of dust into the air. The sunny lights were on the river (it flows into the sea hard by). The little houses and gables gleamed across the waters.

'My child,' said the old man, 'Antonio has brought us more letters from Sweden; he says there is a packet for you among them.' He took her hand in his trembling brown grasp and looked wistfully from beneath his shaggy eyebrows. Angelica looked away, and her heart began to beat. The corn was reaped, the wheat was being housed, and Death, the reaper, was at work among the sunny fields.

Angelica was very silent all the day; in the evening after dinner she wandered out into the garden. She went on beyond the fields that led seawards. The birds up in black labyrinth of twigs sang no longer, but still chirped to the faint skies. The water streaked across the twilight. Some lamp burning in a distant village mingled its light with the evening rainbows. Wide, unrestful, and yet tranquil were her thoughts, longing yet quiescent; grateful after the beating storm for a calm that was not indifference. Was it possible? Could it be that hope had not died with her happiness? Could a new tender tranquillity reach her still, growing out of the many winters and summers of her life as naturally as autumnal tints fall upon the heavy, dusty foliage? She went pacing on and on among shadows and twilights, past the black stems of the trees, across the soft, dim turfy fields. She went and came, and came and went again: a lonely spirit, unrestful, unquiet, and yet grasping the calm of hope not fulfilled perhaps, but realised, of love, not exclusively her own, but love nevertheless. To-night the possibility occurred to her of a friendship more intimate, more tender than that which had always subsisted between herself and Zucchi. This was what her father had meant. This was what perhaps Antonio meant. It seemed strange and wayward now to refuse and to turn away from this home that seemed to open to her wandering spirit. And then by the pathway leading from the house came Antonio,

looking for her, for his old playfellow and the companion of his youth.

'Angelica, where are you?' said Antonio, gravely. 'They told me I might find you here. I have brought you a packet from home,' he went on, slowly. 'With your father's letters this one came, addressed to you.' He put it into her hand, looking at her anxiously. He need not have been anxious. She was very pale, but no longer agitated. The pain was over, dissolved into a strange evening peace, into a tranquillity that was tender, sorrowful, and full of reconciliation. The feeling seemed to spread and to grow more and more indefinite and intense. A star came out over the heads of these two people who had waited half their lives, and whose happiness was not over yet.

As Angelica opened the packet Antonio stood by her side. Inside the paper was a small silken case, and inside the case a cameo ring wrapped in a silver paper, upon which was written the word '*Farewell.*' That was all; but she knew the writing and she knew the ring. How well she remembered it! Two or three great tears fell from her eyes upon the little head smiling unmoved in its diamond setting.

It is the ring he took from me at the ball. They have sent it back to me,' she said. 'Oh, Antonio, what a strange, sad, wasted dream of a life it has all been!'

'It has been no dream,' said Antonio, in his husky,

passionate voice; and as he spoke he took the little ring out of her hand. 'Angelica, I think the ring has come back to you,' he said, 'as a sign of your faithful heart, of that poor man's gratitude. Will you take it from *me* to-day? Will you let it be also a sign of a love that is yours that has never changed?' He put his arm round her as he spoke, and she let her hand fall into his with the faith of one long tried, long wearied, reaching home at last.

It all seemed part of that wondrous twilight, peaceful and harmonious as when music plays on from one modulation to another. It was only Antonio who was telling her that she was free—free to peaceful bondage, free to accept his tender care and domination; and so the twilight mellowed and hushed and blessed two people who had passed the brightness of midday, but who were young still, for they could hope and trust each other.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

IN THE CHURCH OF S. ANDREA DELLE FRATE, AT ROME.

I HAVE been trying to tell a little story, of which the characters and incidents have come to me through a winter's gloom so vividly that as I write now I can scarcely tell what is real and what is but my own imagination in it all. The other day two good friends sent me a parcel containing a gift; a strange realisation of all these dreams. As I opened it I thought of the stories one has read in which visions appear and vanish with a warning sign that remains in the awakened sleeper's hands. Here before me are worn papers, semi-faded parchments, concerning the hero and the heroine of my little history; lawyers' cramped handwritings, involved sentences, and foolscap paper, in which Antony Zucchi conveys his worldly goods to Angelica, the daughter of John Joseph Kauffmann, of Golden Square, in which Angelica's four thousand pounds are carefully tied away, wrapped in a parchment, put aside for future need; there are also law-letters, written by Angelica at her husband's dictation, full of clear business directions; others concerning her

pictures, which come and go across the sea from Italy, escape the French, and are safely deposited in Mr. Bonomi's hands; other papers tell of John Joseph's death —her husband's peaceful end.

But before these last records, closing their lives, many and many a sun rose for these two people following the twilight of that autumnal evening; many and many an after-day was blessed for them as they travelled on henceforth together. From town to town, from Italy to Italy, from Rome to Rome again.

Is that Angelica, once more looking from some high terrace? It is early morning, a dawning city crowns the rising hill, night is still in the valleys, and the country floats before her eyes. She sees the laden bullocks slowly dragging the heavy wagon and crawling the mountain-road into the light. The lamp still burns as it swings from the shaft, the drover's long goat's-skin cloak flaps as he strides along. The great gates of the city on the hill are open to the market, the sunrise is growing, invincible it flashes from the eastern plain, striking every bird, and flower, and gable, every bronze-lit roof, every tendriled garden and slender shoot of vine. What matters the name of the ancient city? Some Bible land seems spread before Angelica's wistful eyes, with shrines and campaniles, and bells swinging against the sky, and saintly figures passing in the glories that come illuminating and sanctifying one more day.

Then Antonio calls her from below; the horses are harnessed, the carriage is waiting which is to take them Southwards. So they pass on together where work and pleasure call them, to Venice, to Rome, where, after old John Joseph's peaceful death, Zucchi led his wife.

Rossi gives a pretty description of Antonio and Angelica in their after-life. They were united and yet unchanged, and true to their different natures. 'If you watch them before a picture,' he says, 'you see Antonio, gifted with eloquence, speaking with energy, judging, dissecting, criticising; Angelica, silent, with animated eyes, listens to her husband and gazes attentive at the canvas. You may read in her face and see her true opinion there. She speaks at last, but it is to praise, for impulse inclines her to dwell on the beauty and charm of the works before her. Hers is the nature of the bee,' continues her old biographer: 'she only sucks honey from the flowers.' So she, whom Goethe praised, lived on; and when her husband died she did not long survive the protector she had taken. 'Poverty I do not fear,' she writes after Zucchi's death, 'but this solitude is terrible.' We may still read a touching farewell to Antonio, written on the marble in the church of Andrea delle Frate, at Rome. 'To my sweetest, kindest husband, not as I had prayed,' Angelica has carved upon his tomb. Their parting was not for long. Angelica's own name is written beside Antonio's. Remembered, forgotten, she passed

away, not ungrateful for the life that had brought her so many things.

One day, not long ago, a little boy in a passion of tears asked for a pencil and paper to draw something that he longed for and could not get. The truth of that baby's philosophy is one which strikes us more and more as we travel on upon our different ways. How many of us must have dreamt of things along the road, sympathies and experiences that may become *us*, some day not ours, inward grace of love, perhaps, not outward sign of it! This spiritual blessing no realisation, no fulfilment alone can bring to us; it is the secret intangible gift that belongs to the mystery of life, the diviner soul that touches us and shows us a home in the desolate places, a silence in the midst of the storm.

FULHAM LAWN

I.

Not a mile from London, almost within the echo of its multitudes and the vibration of its Sunday bells, stands Fulham Lawn, hidden from the road by high walls and by the rustling shade of elm trees, that have shaded and rustled over the heads of many a generation passing on its way through the old house. The green comes out bright in the early summer. Birds up in the branches chirrup and mind their nests. These sparrows are not unlike people who have made their homes in some tranquil cloister or collegiate city, among arches touched by time, of which the ornaments are dispersed and broken, and where the lights shine through cracked and ivy-wreathed ruins. People live on happily in ancient houses and cloisters, and are no older because their homes are old; the leaves are green though the trunks are grey. It may be a fancy that the voices ring more harmoniously from such surroundings, but it is no fancy that the tranquil worlds some people live in seem to repeat their moods—delights, laments, farewells. And sometimes of an evening when The Lawn is quiet, and the lights from this old

farmhouse (for it was nothing more in the beginning) shine out into the twilight gardens—sometimes, then, a nightingale begins to sing.

You can see the tiled roofs and high chimneys of Fulham Lawn, from the river, peeping over the branches at the new rows of houses that are flooding up to its very walls. We do not love the old house the less because it is somewhat quaint in dress and out of mode. Its passages are tortuous and bewildering, its many flights and staircases are utterly confusing to those who are unused to them. It stands safe behind its wall in its quaint old-fashioned garb among the green protecting trees. One day they will give their lives to save the dear old place, and fall one by one like sentries at their posts, but it will be in vain. Meanwhile, human birds, like their companions up in the branches, come year after year persistently haunting the close-shaven lawn, and pecking the liberal crumbs dispersed by the kind hands of the mistress of the house.

Fulham Lawn on a fine day is one of the pleasantest places imaginable: couches and chairs are brought out, and white tables are heaped with claret-jugs, and ice, and cool drinks, and cream and fruit piled up, and hot cakes from the oven. The young folks gather round the strawberry-table, the young men waiting on the maidens, and heaping up their little china plates with crimson fruit. The little children come running up from the swings and shady corners where they have been at play.

Distant figures go crossing the lawns. Little clouds pass flitting across the sky; perhaps a flight of birds is sailing to haunts in the elm-tops hard by: then all the sunset lights begin to burn green and crimson and dazzling white, reflected from the flower-garden; the air seems pink with the scent of the rose-trees; the hum of the voices rises, and then drones away. It is an hour in which to bask and to breathe peace, after the week's disquiet; pleasant things after the jar and noise of life, a little ease after the strained attention and hurry of the London world. It is better rest than you can find alone in your own home, for there your tired fancy only repeats variations upon the doubts and distractions that you have tried in vain to solve or to forget; here you watch the lights, the people coming and going or resting like yourself, and worries are charmed away, and morbid fancies cease from troubling.

It is peculiar to Fulham Lawn that although the people who come there seem to be taking life easily, they are not drones in the hive, but most of them have their own stamp and vocation in life. That young man with the flower in his coat has won his spurs governing some great Indian province; that gallant-looking hero in a white hat, under the lilac-tree, is the Member for N—— whose speeches we have all read, as night after night he has fought his battle on the floor of the House.

It is impossible to write only of the present as one

thinks of Fulham Lawn. Many and many a past is there to some of us, so closely interwoven with the present that it is difficult to distinguish the two. Whose eyes are those looking up at us from the little maiden's face? Not her own only? Whose saying is it we are all thinking of, as we stand talking together, and confound present and past laughter, and smiling faces with others that seem more vivid still than the actual living ones, what voices do we listen to in the words spoken carelessly, that are like an answer to other words that echoed years and years ago?

Yesterday a little boy came running up to his mother with a great yellow rose all glimmering, and he smiled as he threw it into her lap. She took it up and then she blushed when she bent her head over it, and I remembered that the first time I had ever seen her, someone had given her a yellow rose as she sat under that very tree, a shy girl, in a sombre cloud-like dress, still in mourning for her home, knowing no one then, frightened, looking at us all with curious, lightning glances. On that summer's day ten years ago, this beautiful woman was a girl of twenty, shy, silent; but, in truth, it has always been more by signs and looks that Isabella has spoken than by words. How shall I describe her, as she was when I saw her first. Very dark hair, very pale cheeks, very soft wild eyes—more grey than black—a yellow rose was just the

flower to suit her; but Mr. Armar seemed to be scarcely the person to give it, and I was surprised to see him come up with a golden Gloire de Dijon in his hand. 'Here is a fine rose,' he said, scarcely looking at her as he strolled away. It seemed to brighten up her sombre dress, and to harmonise as no pink or crimson would have done with the iron greys and blacks and the little cloud that served her for a head-gear. Was it the gift or was it the rose? When I looked again I saw that the colour had come back into her cheeks; she scarcely moved, but it appeared to me as if a sudden flash of lightning from the cloud had revealed a whole world beneath its gloom. As that lightning flashed, it struck others besides myself. 'What a pretty girl she is,' said young Mr. B——, the son of the house. (He himself was engaged to be married to a fair-haired maiden; he was hard to please, and had scarcely noticed Isabella before.) I remember that as we were still talking of her, a dim face, with wild hair and spectacles and radiating eyes, came out of the crowd towards us. When I think of it now, across the mists of years, it puts me in mind—I scarcely know why—of that description of Victor Hugo's of a mask floating upon the surface of the water. The haggard face, the dress strange and loosely fashioned, those sloping shoulders seemed scarcely to belong to everyday life. The young man passed on in a straight gliding line, looking neither to the right nor to the left, though many people turned as he went by.

'There goes Nieland,' said one of the young men. I don't wonder you stare at him. Did you hear of his challenging the Hanging Committee because they sent back his picture?'

Mr. Nieland (so I was afterwards told) was a German —a painter of *light*—that was his specialty. He had produced some very fine pictures and some very bad ones: people said he was a genius for six weeks in the year. Yes, W——, our own Academician, thought very highly of some of Nieland's work, and had first introduced him to one or two of his friends.

'He is the strangest fellow,' said Mr. B——. 'He is a *protégé* of Sir George's. I met him in the East, and I see a great deal of him, but there are days when he scarcely seems himself. I think I had better go after him now, or he will be challenging somebody else.'

And the young man hurried off in pursuit of the slight figure that was still moving on in aimless progression between the groups, looking neither to the right nor to the left, though most of the people present looked up as he passed. Mr. Nieland went so swiftly that Mr. B—— did not come up to him until he had stopped suddenly, after completing his circuit, in the very place where I had first seen him issue from the crowd with the strange floating step peculiar to him.

He was then standing opposite to poor Isabella in her cloud of grey, and staring at her fixedly. She, poor girl,

seemed to shrink uncomfortably beneath his wild looks. She was too shy to move away, but the colour died from her face, and by some odd chance the leaves of the yellow rose that she was holding fell from their stem and lay scattered over her gown and on the grass at her feet. It was just then that Mr. B—— took his friend's arm and led him away, and Armar, sent by kind Lady B—— (who seemed to have the gift of divining the minds of her guests), came and offered his arm to the young lady, saying: 'I am desired to bring you to our hostess.'

The girl thanked him by a grateful look and jumped up with a quick sigh of relief. Armar made no attempt to converse with her, but led his charge to a spot where little Lady B——, with the help of her tall daughters, was pouring out tea, and dispensing from their bountiful stores; here was bread ready baked in the oven—here were the fruits of the earth—strawberries growing ready plucked in their dishes—it was a table-land flowing not only with milk and honey, but with cream and crystallised sugar. 'You must allow me to cater for you,' said Henry Armar, with a polite little bow.

There was a certain gentle old-fashioned gallantry about him that young men sometimes smiled at, but for which all his women friends loved him: the girls used to feel happier when they saw him coming across the lawn; Lady B—— had trusted him for many years; he was her cousin. and the little lady, though she was kind to every

one, did not admit many to her intimacy. He was one of the few people who were privileged to gather the roses that grew in special beauty in the rose-garden of Fulham Lawn. Though the young men smiled, they had a real liking for him. Lord B—— consulted him, and relied upon his judgment. Happily such characters are not quite rare in the eager throng. Which of us cannot think of some among us to whom we all instinctively go for rest and sympathy: people who live to consider other people; the gentle links that bind turbulent spirits together? Perhaps they may not be so well known to fame as A. B. or C.; but who would not rather gain, as they do, the unconscious love and confidence of other hearts than win the noisiest laudations of Fame?—Fame gets black in the face now-a-days, celebrating first one ware and then another, but the notes of a trumpet are not so comforting to human hearts as the gentle beam of kindly eyes.

I don't think that, until he saw Isabella, Henry Armar had ever had a sentiment since he was a boy. People were so used to treat him as a friend and a brother, and to confide their own feelings to him, that it never seemed to occur to them or to him to put himself in the foreground. But Isabella, to whom all things were new and strange, had nothing to confide (except, perhaps, her terror of poor Nieland's curious glares); to her Mr Armar was a mysterious personage detached from the

crowd, coming out of another world to that which she had lived in of late—a world in which she went about in faded mourning; in *crêpe* for the present, as well as for the past, poor child: for daily deaths of home, of the light of life, of the loving appreciation to which she had been used so long; and so when Armar brought her a chair, a rose, some strawberries and cream, when he made a polite little bow, and a little joke to amuse her, this girl, who was but half fledged, and whose wings did not yet bear her (they were stronger wings than Henry's and would carry her far away beyond his flight one day)—this young fledgling's clear eyes dazzled him with the bright lights peculiar to them. 'How good you are to me,' she said at last, with a tremulous voice. This was a very different measure of gratitude from Lady Fanny's 'thank'ee,' or Mrs. Calmair's careless little nod. 'I want you to tell me a little more about yourself,' said Mr. Armar, sitting down beside his young companion. 'Lady B—— did me the honour to introduce me to you, but she did not even tell me your name.'

II.

Someone suggested one day that the story of Fulham Lawn should be written, but it is only a fragment of the history of the people who come there that is told upon the lawn. Who shall attempt to weave together or to disentangle the various clews which have brought each guest thither, from their various homes and minds and states?

There are the painters' homes in the green suburbs, or, like Nieland's, in some deserted quarter of the town, with lofty studios, of which the blinds are flapping in the sun, and the shadows trembling on the matted floors, this hot summer's day. There are the politicians' lodgings down farther along the banks of the river, where the great public buildings are, and the stores of wisdom carefully wrapped up in blue paper, and tied up tight with pink tape. There are the philosophers' homes, more or less comfortably furnished in inverse ratio to the depths of their philosophy, from which rise natural streams of ink, flowing and overflooding the land.

Unless something is done, we shall be all drowned in our own geysers. Then there are the trimonthly homes

of country squires in the pleasant south-western districts where they establish themselves with butlers, horses, daughters, and ladies'-maids, for the great general race of the season. It is an exciting but unintelligible performance in broughams and other carriages. You drive to No. 1,000, then all back to No. 10,000; then home; then change garments, and round the corner; then home again, undress, re-dress, and all appear simultaneously at the opposite side of the way. If they all stood still, it would come to very much the same result. But the young people enjoy the exercise, and the old ones get to like it from habit. These are rolling homes, without much moss, some people might think.

Henry Armar's home was with the lawyers, far away from the sound of multitudinous wheels. He lived in the Temple, in Garden Court, with a few old prints and china cups to ornament his rooms, an old wooden creaking staircase to lead to them. He had a picture or two, by which he set great store. Sometimes his women friends came to see him in this tranquil domain, and he would then produce Sèvres teacups and a Dresden teapot to feast them with. He wrote his articles—he went to and fro from his club Such a life may be a little dull at times, but there is some intelligence in it and some variety; and, for a friendly and sensitive nature like Armar's, many an interest and faithful affection.

Can any man's life be so hopeless, and utterly ugly

and meaningless, as the lives of some women?—Isabella's, for instance. A good Samaritan had picked her up, and taken her, not to an inn, but into her own home, and into her own daily life. This girl was thankful for a home—for a corner in any life; but what an existence it was! Ornamented by little tags of faded ribbon, and bugles, and cheap artificial flowers, stowed away between the four gaily papered walls of some dreary suburban villa, enlivened by gossip and the dire offences of the maid-of-all-work, with feasts of buttered toast, and greasy midday meals. The daily peaceful round of sunrise and sunset comes distorted through such a medium. Sentiment, romance, in such a foggy atmosphere of commonplace!—who would look for such things? Don't we all know the look of the house? The various parasols and overshoes in the passage below; the dish-cover, the druggeted flight of stairs, and the stained-glass window on the landing, where a faded gilt card-rack, containing some dusty cards, is displayed on a table covered by cotton crochet-work. Poor shabby suburban life, with what airs of superiority it is described, and pointed at, and patronised! For an ugly face, there is no lack of charity; but Heaven help the tasteless! for them there is no sympathy on earth—although perhaps in heaven there may be some mansions prepared for them.

Out of the window of the room in which she sat, Isabella could see a railing, a long dusty road, leading by

the many arches of a cemetery; the back of the house looked out across cabbage-fields, that spread away in the distance towards some unfinished suburb, begun and abandoned to its fate. There was the desolateness of the country without its peace; the dust and gloom of a town without its life and interest. This was not the opinion of the lady of the house. 'We are just handy in the way of everything,' says Mrs. Delafosse, complacently, 'with all the advantages of the country. Did you think it was all up with you, my dear?' says the old lady, nodding her black ringlets. 'Here was your old auntie coming to look after you. And this is as convenient a place as one could wish to see. Hot water laid on, and cheap at thirty-five. I have handsome furniture, too—family furniture of my poor husband's. And you will find the girl a nice willing servant. You must call me aunt—won't you, dear? Why, I knew your papa when he was in shorts: many a time has he enjoyed my gooseberry jam.' Mrs. Delafosse always made the best of everything, and was enchanted to have a listener to her beatitudes. She dearly loved a talk, but talking without a listener was like making bricks without straw, or playing draughts with a dummy, or like unrequited love: being satisfied herself, she wished her young charge to be satisfied too.

'Isabella, you should look up—you should, indeed! Look at me, my dear, I've had my troubles too. You should cheer up a bit when I do so much to see you happy.'

'That you do,' said Isabella. 'O dear me! how I wish——'

The girl stopped abruptly; she did not want to seem ungrateful. She looked round at the narrow walls, the massive chandelier swathed in yellow muslin, the scrolled and sprawling and fusty draperies, the portrait over the chimney of the late Mr. Delafosse, sitting in a handsome mahogany chair. She looked at the gaudy drugget under foot, the bookcase of battered novels against the wall. Would this ever seem so much like home as the shabbiest, dingiest little housekeeper's waiting-room at The Lawn hard by?

Mrs. Delafosse had many enjoyments. Tea-drinking (the strongest black family Congou), crochetings, and patching, second-hand novels to read—a penny paper now and then (it generally came limp and two days old: newspapers soon droop their wings—they are like those insects that are only created to live for four-and-twenty hours). Poor Isabella was fastidious. She hated to read a much-thumbed book; strong black Congou made her head ache; her tastes were indefinite, gentle—for things indicated and felt, rather than strongly marked; for people who charmed her, rather than for those who would take her by storm. And yet she hated herself for shrinking from this home of hers, when she remembered that when all others had failed, this one opened to take her in; and when other fairer faces were turned away or gone from this life for ever, Mrs.

Delafosse's kind and red and vulgar countenance came with true loveliness, smiling upon her gloom. How well she remembered coming to this strange home, sitting in a cab by her protectress!

Good Samaritans are of all conditions and appearances. This one was very fat and gorgeously apparelled, and would have required a very strong ass to bear her, but she belonged to the kingdom of Samaria all the same; and when she heard that Isabella was alone among thieves by the wayside, she came driving up to the lodgings in a cab to carry her straight away. She had been a humble companion in the girl's family. She had married a curate, who had been struck by her bright face and her talents for housekeeping. She had first married and then cheerfully survived him. When the great panic came, and Isabella's father also lay dying, a ruined man, with his heart torn for his poor child's future, the good old creature trotted off to cheer 'Master Frank's' last hours by promises of protection for his poor little girl.

'I'll be a mother to her,' says Mrs. Delafosse. 'You can trust her to me as if she was my own. Don't you be afraid. With *her* pretty face, there's plenty will want to take care of her.'

And, like a true-hearted old lady, she kept her word. She carried the girl off to Bellevue Row. She would not touch one farthing of her slender allowance. Nor did she resent her *protégée's* flights into worlds where she herself

did not penetrate. Kind Lady B—— had asked her to The Lawn, but Mrs. Delafosse resolutely refused; only she would have liked to have sent her parasol and her best shawl there by deputy, and was quite unhappy when Isabella declined the loan of these adornments.

The Lawn was only a little way from Bellevue Row, and the park gates would open wide to admit the slim mourning figure, coming from the sun-glare without, into the cool river glades. Good Mrs. Delafosse used to walk up with Isabella and leave her safe at the door. They used to come along the dusty road, with its dreary villas and horizons of cabbages, and of smoky sunset skies. Nieland painted a picture once with this very background, and a yellow streaked sunset, and a figure of a tired Irish-woman finishing her work in the foreground, where the mists were beginning to rise. The picture made a sensation that year, and Isabella exclaimed when she saw it. 'What a thing to paint!' says Mrs. Delafosse, who had accompanied her on the occasion to the Academy. The old lady chuckled over it for five minutes at least.

On the other side of the road was the cemetery, as I have said, with its many arches and white tombstones gleaming and crowding behind the rails, where the multitude were sleeping silently. What a solemn place it was even in the broad daylight. Isabella used to hurry her steps a she went by and look away. Sometimes they would meet a funeral issuing from the great gates. If

Isabella had been a Catholic she would have crossed herself; being a Protestant, as she was, her heart beat, and a little verse out of the Evening Hymn used to come into her head. Mrs. Delafosse, for her part, found a certain excitement in watching these mourning processions. She used to count them from the dining-room window, and tell Isabella on her return how many had gone by. And so the sun burnt hot and the summer went on, and one day followed another for Isabella, and The Lawn opened its gates to her, as week after week she used to come as usual walking up with her protectress or the little maid by her side. They would leave her to find her way up to the house, along the sweep, past the elm-trees, to the front door. Very often she met Armar as she came along, but if she did not meet him, she knew that when she reached the house she should find her rose ready gathered lying upon the hall table. It was a silent love-making—so silent that the girl scarcely ever put words to it, or realised very plainly that he was more to her than anyone else: she used to see him watching her sometimes, but Nieland, too, often watched her; only when he looked she used to feel as if she hated him, and his eyes frightened her as he gleamed through his spectacles.

III.

Was Armar more than a friend? One day he did not come, and Isabella missed him sorely; it was the first time he had failed. The river looked less cool, the grass less green, the friendly greetings seemed to jar and to distract her, and Nieland came and sat in the vacant place by her side. How well she remembered that day and the pleasure and pain of it. The painter talked to her in English that was as good as her own, but she could scarcely understand or listen to what he was saying, so anxiously was she looking for the sight of her friend's familiar face. I have never described Armar, because there was so little to describe. He was a slight commonplace-looking man, with dark hair turning grey; he had a thin sallow face, a black moustache, and a gentle voice; there were certain little old-fashioned bachelor ways that seemed to belong to him by right—in any other man they might have been deemed absurd; but Henry Armar was too simple and unaffected to be ridiculous, only he was pathetic sometimes. So on this especial day he did not come; other people came and went, and greeted each

other, and did not seem to notice his absence, and once during the afternoon Lady B—— came smiling quite brightly, followed by two of her daughters, and put her hand kindly upon Isabella's shoulder. 'Is Mr. Nieland asking you to let him paint your picture?' she said. 'I give my consent—it will be a pleasant surprise for my cousin.'

'Where is Mr. Armar?' Isabella asked; but they passed on without hearing the faltering question. Isabella wondered what Lady B—— had meant. Was Armar away? could he care? Would he like her picture to be painted? Why would he like it? Had Mr. Nieland been asking leave to paint her portrait? She had scarcely listened. No, never, never—anyone but him. His looks always frightened her; she felt as if he could see through and through her.

'Why are you so afraid of me?' said Nieland, suddenly, as if he could read her thought. 'Why would you rather anyone painted you than myself? See here: I will sketch you yet—now.' And he eagerly pulled out a sketch-book from his pocket and began turning over the leaves, but she would not look. She got up in an agitated way. She said she did not feel well, that she should go into the house to rest; she begged Nieland not to sketch her, not to come; and she glided away across the lawn. There was something of a bird about Isabella—she was a human bird, delicate and swift and startled, only the song

was wanting. To-day she was greatly disturbed—was it that she missed her rose? that Armar was absent? that Nieland's inquisitive glances distressed her? After a moment or two that she spent fluttering in the morning-room, she happened to see the German's figure crossing one of the windows, and she started up with a frightened impulse, and fled away through the hall and the open door, and along the green deserted sweep to the gates. All the servants and visitors were in the front of the house towards the river, and no one saw her go. Shadows and leaves trembled overhead, grasses looked green underfoot; and the depths of the cool lilac trees, and the fringing elms and chestnuts, made a delight of the sultry summer; but Isabella was too much distressed for enjoyment. She could scarcely have told you why; her pulses were throbbing, she could not rest. It seemed to her that the painter was calling her back, that he was reading her heart, and she could not bear it; and she fled away in nervous haste out once more into the roads again. She knew the way almost blindfold—crossing and recrossing by one dismal street or lane after another until she came to the vista of the cemetery arches that led to her home. As she got to the gates, she was stopped for the first time; a long, slow line of funeral carriages came passing her one by one; and as she looked up she saw the despairing face of a woman with wan eyes, leaning against one of the carriage-windows, and a sudden pang of sympathy caused

her heart to sink. As the last carriage rolled away, someone who had been also standing waiting, bare-headed on the opposite side of the road, came across, and called to her by name, and she started with a little nervous cry. But it was not Nieland. It was Armar, on his way to The Lawn. He had been coming along by the arches of the cemetery, and thinking of Isabella, indeed, but not expecting to find her there.

'What are you doing here?' he said, coming up to her and noting with pleasure her looks of sudden relief. 'You are not going home just as I am coming? I could not get away earlier,' he went on; 'Do come back to Fulham Lawn—unless you are tired. Won't you take my arm?'

Isabella did not refuse: she clung to his arm, pale and agitated, 'I was coming away,' she said, 'but I will go back now, Mr. Armar. Are they not terrible?' she said; 'black, and terrible, and slow. Did you see that poor woman's face? I dream of them at night,' she went on a little wildly; 'I cannot forget them. They seem to me always passing. Even when the shutters are closed and the curtains drawn, I feel them going by. My aunt *will* not believe me.'

'Poor child,' said Henry Armar, full of compassion, 'You are nervous and lonely. Funerals are only the same black coaches over and over again, with so many yards of black cloth dipped and redipped. I think myself they are

a great mistake. It is not death which is so awful, and which frightens us; it is the sham black dye and the make-believe woe at so much a yard. 'When I die,' he said kindly, 'I should like my friends to come, let us say, in lilac or white, and with roses in their hands, and to think of me with loving sympathy instead of with terror. A lonely man as I am may ask so much of his friends. Will you promise me,' he said suddenly, 'that when I die you will come without regret or pain; with kindness only?'

Isabella looked at him; he had never spoken in such a way before. 'Without regret?' she said, gently; 'what do you mean? you who are my kindest, best friend?'

Something in the trusting and troubled look of her sweet face at that moment overcame all Armar's prudent considerations, all his long self-restraints. He spoke as he had never intended to speak. Though he had meant to love her always, he had never deliberately looked forward to an end to this silent love-making of his: now he spoke almost before he had felt what he was speaking. 'Ah, Isabella, make me your best friend; give me a right to feel that I am first with you.' He looked strange and excited, and waited for her to answer, stopping short in the dusty road.

The girl's face changed again and again: she was silent. her eyes brimmed with tears. 'Yes; oh, what can I say?' she said. 'Let us be ourselves: that is enough, is it not?

are we not happy as we are?' And Armar did not say no, or press her further. At that minute he was happy standing there in the deserted road, with the lights flying and the cabbage-fields baking in the sun, and with the soft touch of Isabella's little hand resting on his arm.

That evening Isabella stayed to dinner with her friends. I guessed how matters were when I saw Mr Armar's agitation, and her appealing conscious looks. Mr. Nieland had been also asked to dine. He took me in, but scarcely spoke, and sat scrutinising the poor girl's blushes and trembling glances. After dinner Lady B—— flung open the tall glass windows opening on the garden, and instead of going into the drawing-room, strolled out upon the lawn. The sun had set and the shadows were gathering. I saw Mr. Armar and Isabella wander off together: Miss B——, the eldest daughter of the house, went clipping at the rose-trees with a basket on her arm. Some soft vapours were beginning to float hither and thither in the gardens; a dim veil seemed to fall upon us from the solemn depths of the great vault overhead. There was a great calm and sense of ease in this placid hour, passing by to the sound of the flowing river. All the vivid feelings and emotions of the day began to fade imperceptibly; a sort of solitude came to each one of us wandering hither and thither in the calm evening. Where do people go to when evenings fall? and why do

we each begin to feel more alone than at any other time? There are as many people in the world at eventide as at morning, but our hearts grow quieter for awhile, our fancies and feelings leave us in peace. The day is over and we are making ready for the night.

So the dusk had come, the sun had set, and the shadows were gathering in the garden, and the lights from the house already cast yellow gleams across the grass. The rose-walk was still in the day, but the lawn and the laurel-grove were in the night. And when the lights began to pass away, pink roses turned white, the green leaves became grey and black, the trees were silent, Armar and Isabella went wandering between the laurel-hedges in shadow and in silence; all hushed, in the faded lights. I was walking by myself: Mr. Nieland, who had kept me company at first, had just gone in (he left me abruptly, saying it was no place for him), and almost immediately after I met the lovers in the dusk. I could scarcely see their faces, but I could hear the tone of Armar's voice.

'Do you know what has happened?' he said to me. 'Can you guess? Shall I tell her?' he said, turning to Isabella.

'You need not tell me,' I answered, laughing; 'when did it all happen?'

'From the moment I first saw her,' Armar said, smiling; 'but Isabella only agreed half-an-hour ago.'

His voice deepened as he spoke; Isabella sighed gently, and seemed to stir in the dimness. Poor child, it was well she should be loved, and cared for, and own a home and a sheltering heart in life. She was too sensitive and too reserved to play her part alone. Unreserve is a priceless gift to those who are made lonely by fate, and whose home and friends and sympathies must needs belong by rights to others. Isabella was so discreet, so silent, so undemonstrative, that no casual friendships and interests were possible to her, and yet, more than anyone, it seemed to me that she must be in need of them. As I have said before, Isabella's was a song without words.

Her eyes could speak, her lips could utter, though they might be silent. Her very repose seemed to be more eloquent than many people's animation. Soft clouds and summer lightnings, this was what she most recalled to me. But I never could realise her entirely; her mind was a difficult one to grasp; vague, sensitive, impressionable, it seemed to elude one's rude attempts to fathom it, and to keep its secret safely to the end.

The guests were all assembled in the great hall when Armar and Isabella came in at last, with two pale dream-faces, coming out of the darkness into the commonplace candle and fire light of daily life. Every evening a great log was lit in the big chimney-place, for those who were chilly and who liked the blaze.

Lord B—— was writing in an inner room; Nieland

and the young ladies of the house and the young men were standing at a table looking over some drawings. Lady B——, who was a frail little person and easily tired, was resting in her accustomed corner, slowly twisting scarlet wool and ivory pins into a tangle. They all looked up with interest when the two came in. Isabella went across to her protectress, and sitting down beside her, said a few words in a low tone. Armar joined the young men, who only refrained from congratulating him because of Isabella's presence, for in some way—I know not how—I think Nieland must have been the oracle—everyone knew what had happened. Nieland looked more excited, and as I thought more malicious than ever; he darted here and there; shook out his weird locks; stood constantly with his head turned in the direction of the two ladies, who seemed absorbed in their confidences; he talked and laughed wildly; and at last, with his usual persistence, began again to urge his wish to paint Isabella.

Now he asked Henry Armar, as if he had a right to give his consent.

'I have always wanted to paint her, and she never would agree to it. Look here: I have already made a few studies of her.'

Armar looked pleased. It was delightful to him to be appealed to on such a subject. Nieland opened his book and showed us a dozen pencil-sketches—notes seized in haste, quaint movements that were Isabella's own 'turn

of head or droop of curl,' sideways, backways—he had indicated her with such extraordinary sympathy that Armar exclaimed with delight and wanted to lay hands on the pictures then and there; and yet I wondered at it, for there was one peculiarity about every one of these sketches which struck me. I don't know if anybody else remarked it at the time. There was not one of these drawings but had something in it of shrinking and repulsion. Nieland was so true an artist, he had so genuine a feeling, notwithstanding all his vagaries and experiments, that he could not help indicating what he really saw; and so when he sketched Isabella, whether it was consciously or unconsciously I know not, the instinctive aversion with which she had always regarded him seemed felt by him, the flowing draperies of her gown seemed held away lest they should brush him as she passed, her head was turned aside as if from a repugnant sight, a look of pain was in her face. What a beautiful strange face it was, and what a lovely pain in the deep brows and serene drooped eyes! We were all standing in a group, when she rose from her seat at the distant end of the room and came smiling up to us: her talk had brought a bright blush into her cheeks already, a new expression had come into her eyes.

'What are you looking at?' she said, as Armar made room for her. Then, when she saw what it was, her fair colour died away. 'Why did you draw those pictures,' she said, 'when I asked you not?' And with a flash she

turned upon Nieland and looked at him indignantly. As she looked, her anger seemed to rise. 'No gentleman would have done it,' she said passionately. Armar was greatly distressed; he thought Isabella was hard upon his friend. Nieland blushed up and looked troubled too. Mr. B—— tried to make a little joke, and said 'You think you have a copyright in your own face, Miss Isabella.' 'It is perhaps fortunate for the world that it is not so,' said another young man gallantly. But Isabella never smiled; she still stood confronting the painter; he looked utterly crestfallen.

'I did not mean to make you angry. You don't understand,' he said, meekly. 'My art is like my breath; I cannot do one thing or another, only that which comes to me. I did not mean those studies for you, only they came to be you. It is a sin,' he went on angrily; 'if you had one grain of genuine feeling you would think it a murder to destroy those beautiful drawings; but since you wish it I burn them'—and as he spoke he suddenly flung the book into the great fire, and the flames leaped up, in one moment curling with their pointed tongues.

Henry Armar uttered an exclamation of regret, and would have sprung forward to save the sketches, if the German, with one glance at his persecutrix, had not placed himself in front of the blaze. Isabella never moved. She was relentless for the moment. It was this quality in her that seemed to me so strange and unex-

pected in one so gentle. Perhaps relentlessness belongs to the young most specially, and to the gentlest and least shaken as yet by the onslaughts of life.

Relentless she might be, but she was not proof against Armar's gentle reproaches. Lady B—— also interfered, and begged Isabella as a personal favour to make it up with the poor painter.

'You do not know how sensitive he is,' the kind lady said. 'He feels things more keenly and bitterly than you, dear Isabella, can have any conception of. I trust with all my heart that you may never know such a feeling.' And the elder lady took her in her arms and kissed her.

'Dear Isabella,' Armar said, 'we won't let anyone be unhappy to-day. Let him paint your picture to make amends for the conflagration.'

A curious double emotion seemed at work in the girl's heart. She looked up at Armar, her eyes darkened while her face softened and relented. And then again her features seemed hard set, while her eyes looked soft and grateful. 'He shall paint me if you wish it,' she said, 'but it is for *you*, not for him.'

IV.

Herr Nieland's studio was in an old house in Langham Street. What strange fancies must have haunted the old room, coming to be caught on their flight, not easily and gaily, as some people imagined, but with an agony of effort which only those who have experienced it can appreciate. It was almost a torture at times to work. Light was his ideal, the dream he pursued; work was his tyrant, his taskmaster, to be defied at times, but never eluded. Nieland loved his ease, but when he worked he pursued his ideal angrily, with passion and impatience, not calmly as a master, but with frenzy like a neophyte—and then for a time, the struggle being over, the battle lost or won, he would give up working altogether, and go away no one knew where. There were all sorts of rumours about him. Some said he was a spiritualist, and gave *séances* in the provinces; others that he had another name, and life, and studio somewhere else, and that he and a well-known German photographer at Rome were the same man. He knew people everywhere. He rarely painted portraits, and yet some of these were among the

finest things he had ever done. He had a peculiar gift at times for seizing the individuality of his sitter, and fixing it there upon the canvas. He did it he knew not how. 'There are some portraits I cannot paint,' he used to say; 'the faces are like dissolving kaleidoscopes as I look at them, but with others it seems to me as if the spirit of my sitter lays hold of me, and possesses me, so that I cannot escape from it. It is for that very reason that I hate to paint portraits.'

He explained this to me at length one day. 'I get frightened by my sitters,' he said, 'and seem to feel with their feelings, to guess their thoughts, to wish their wishes—it is horrible. People think I am possessed, and they are right. I am a sort of spiritual ghoul,' he cried, more and more excited; 'I go about the world drinking in the souls of my companions.' He tossed his long hair as he spoke, and looked up into my face through his spectacles to see how I should take this announcement. Something of poor Isabella's horror came over me. He was talking for effect, and yet it was the truth he was speaking. I could feel it, and a sort of shiver ran over me as he went on—'Yes, it is the truth; as for inspiring dislike, I am used to repulse people: it rather amuses me. Mine is a repulsive magnetism, but I am not the less subject to stronger minds than my own. There is one person who hates me, I sometimes think, and for whom I would give——' He stopped short, and as he spoke he

sighed deeply. 'She will be here directly,' he said: 'you must forgive me for turning you away, but I cannot allow you to remain in the room with my sitter.'

This uncomfortable little talk had taken place in Nieland's studio, whither I had gone to ask his advice for a young friend of my own, a painter who was going to Munich and in need of assistance. I feel bound to add that I found Mr. Nieland ready to help, and full of kindness in the matter.

So Isabella came and sat for her picture; and the faithful Armar came too, and found time to wait each day until Nieland had done his task; and yet the painter was not satisfied with his work. He changed, and altered, and spoilt canvas after canvas. He got angry at last.

'You will not let me paint you, Miss Isabella!' he cried; 'that is why I cannot get on. Mr. Armar, I wish you would go further away.'

'She is sitting like a mouse,' said Armar; 'don't you be unreasonable.' Henry Armar shifted his place as he spoke, and went and sat down in a farther corner of the room, opposite a great looking-glass that had been hung up there. 'I should like you to paint her just as I see her here,' said Mr. Armar, smiling as he looked in the glass.

'Ah, that is better,' said the painter, beginning instantly.

Isabella's eyes were fixed upon the great glass in which Armar was also looking. It was placed at such an angle

that they could each see one another's image, instead of their own, reflected on the surface. What a contrast there was between the two pictures—hers bright, and young, and beautiful, with the delicate bent dark head and wealth of youthful beauty; his pale and old, and commonplace, wan and trouble-lined. The same surface reflected them both to his contentment, to her content in his contentment. As she looked she forgot Nieland's presence and thought only of Armar. As he looked he wished he was a painter, and imagined himself painting her features. Only she thought—she could not help it—that she had never seen him look so old and sad, and a fancy came to her that she was looking at him for the first time. It was true she had never seen him before. This was a friend, but surely not her husband. The passing glamour was gone from her eyes, she saw him as others saw him.

'What a pity he is so grave,' she thought, 'that I did not meet him ten years ago. I wonder what he was like when he was young. How glad I am that he is happy at last.' And she smiled unconsciously, and Armar drank in the smile. Nieland gave a sort of sigh over his paint-pots

'Have you painted me, Mr. Nieland?' cried Isabella gaily.

'I have only painted you because he wishes it,' said Nieland, rudely. 'You know you would not consent of

your own accord. I am not painting for you, but for him.'

'Oh, how I hope it will succeed,' faltered Isabella.

He painted on diligently: Isabella grew drowsy at last: the lights travelled on across the floor, the cries reached them from the streets without, and the flowing noise of the distant wheels seemed to lull her to sleep. How quiet the studio was, though it stood in the very heart of the great noisy city. Armar watched and waited; the time seemed a little long; and he then began to walk about the place, looking at the casts and sketches hanging up against the walls. He made no sound, for his movements were naturally gentle and deliberate, but the painter complained testily. 'I wish you would sit down again,' he said. 'I cannot paint her unless you help me to keep her awake; another half hour I shall have done.'

Isabella walked away along the street with Armar when the sitting was over. 'How is it,' she said, 'that I am always so tired when I sit to Mr. Nieland?—why does it so exhaust me? I won't go there again.'

'His room is hot,' Armar answered, 'and you were drowsy, but the picture is perfectly beautiful. He is a strange fellow: sometimes he looked at me and painted you. I cannot understand how he did it. People say,' continued Armar, 'that he is not careful enough about letting his colours dry, and that his pictures are apt to fade. I hope that will not be the case with this one.'

Nieland sent the picture home without another sitting. It was more a sketch than a finished picture, but it was very beautiful, and in his happiest style. Henry Armar gave a luncheon-party in honour of it. He had two rooms on the ground-floor in Garden Court, and he invited us all: Lord and Lady B—— and myself, and Mr. B——, Isabella, Mrs. Delafosse, and the painter; there were also two young men, friends of his, who dropped in. The old dusty rooms were all brightened up with flowers to welcome Isabella. There were four great bunches of roses on the table, one for each of us ladies. Lawyers have some secret for conjuring up delicious luncheons and treating their friends with sumptuous hospitality on occasion, and Armar had ordered everything that he could think of to do honour to his guests. They came, for the most part, very ready to be pleased, and they exclaimed at the preparations—claret-cups and salads, lobsters and chickens. From which of the Inns of Court these dainties were procured I do not know; I took it for granted the salads and strawberries grew in the Temple gardens, as Armar declared. Armar was in high spirits, for him: he drank Isabella's health in a glass of champagne, and Nieland's and Lady B——'s, and would have filled tumblerfuls all round again and again if we had been so minded. When the ices and strawberries were over, the great event of the meeting

came off, and we were let into the inner room to look at the picture.

How well I remember the little scene! Armar drawing back a blind, so that the light might fall full and bright upon the treasure. Nieland's wild anxious glance wandering away from the picture he had painted to the original, who was standing by. Isabella very pale, and looking scarcely like herself, as they all gazed, first at her, and then at the image of her that was smiling from the wall. Nieland had painted her in white, with the sweet outgoing look which so specially belonged to her. She was passing by, and looking over her shoulder as she passed—looking reproachfully, so it seemed to me, and yet with a patient and trusting expression, quite different from the old look of aversion that I remembered. They all cried out that it was lovely.

'It is Isabella herself!' cried Lord B——.

'Is it not wonderful?' said Armar; and, as he spoke, he went up to her and laid his hand for an instant on hers.

And then I saw the very expression the painter had chosen to depict. She looked at him a little strangely, reproachfully, from a distance, as it were, and then turning slowly away, went and stood in the old wooden window, and gazed out into the quaint old court, with its many casements, and suggestions of an unknown life, and its iron rails and its glimpse of a flowing stream.

'I don't think the light here is as good as it was in Nieland's studio,' said young Mr. B——, 'one can't see the picture quite so well.'

'The light has changed since we came into the room,' Lady B—— said; 'it struck me, before you spoke, that the colours did not look so bright. Henry, you must hang it in another place: the light is not so good as it was.'

And yet the sun was shining full and placid upon the stone flags of the court; through the panes of the narrow casements I saw a glimpse of blue sky unchanged overhead, and the shadows seemed to me scarcely to have moved, so still were they upon the wooden floor. Henry shifted the picture; but we could not get it exactly right.

'You will all have to come here again at the same hour,' said Armar gaily, 'in order to see the picture to perfection.'

'We must congratulate you, Mr. Nieland,' said Lady B——, kindly, as we all were going off. 'It is wonderful. It is more than a likeness.' Nieland, however, did not seem to care to be complimented. He shrugged his shoulders, saying, 'Let him take care of it now he has got it.' We were all standing round the old-fashioned doorway, waiting for the carriages to drive up. Isabella, who seemed tired, was sitting on the wooden stairs, wrapped in her usual grey cloak. 'What is it, dear?' I heard Armar say. 'Are you vexed? Has anything gone

wrong?' And then I saw that the girl's eyes were full of tears.

Mrs. Delafosse, who was in her usual spirits, began telling us about a picture done of her by a gentleman who travelled about the country, and charged nothing extra for fancy dress. Nieland, who had evidently been taking too much champagne, came close up to me, and began asking if I remembered my talk with him the other day.

'You don't understand about reflected influence,' he whispered. 'I'll tell you something all the same. I did not paint that picture as you imagine. The two painted it by my hand as they saw each other reflected in the glass. I could not have painted her alone. She was stronger than me. He will soon find she is stronger than him, and then his turn will come.'

I was quite glad that the carriage drove up just then and that I could escape from this incoherent talk. We got in, and drove away across the quiet courts, under the dark archway out into busy, struggling Fleet Street. The horses' feet tramped homewards.

Isabella seemed depressed and silent all the way back. Mrs. Delafosse was in high spirits, and talked without ceasing, until we put her down at her own door. 'What a pity!' cried Lady B——. 'Isabella, you have forgotten your beautiful roses!'

'Have I?' said the girl, looking round, and waking from a sort of day-dream.

V.

I STAYED some short time with my friends at The Lawn. I could not feel so happy as I should have done in this engagement. Armar used to come day after day when his work was over. Isabella used to glide into the great drawing-room, looking perfectly lovely, but ill and anything but happy. To be sure, hers was a twilight nature. She was a beautiful evening star, that paled before the brilliance and heat of the day; only I should have liked to see some token of animation and interest now and then —some tone other than the neutral tint she took refuge in. Except for her rose, there seemed no single bright bit of colour belonging to her.

As for Henry Armar, for a time there was no doubt about his happiness. Our bachelor, with his precise ways and gentle old-fashioned habits, was transformed. Then he began to change, too, with Isabella's change, and I noticed a sad look in his face reflected from hers.

And yet his one trouble seemed to be about his picture, which he declared he could see fading day by day. He took it to Sir George, his friend the Academician, who

said that Nieland had neglected to varnish it. Nieland himself had disappeared, no one knew whither.

One day the young men of the house insisted upon taking Armar to some fashionable tailor's. They said he would disgrace Isabella's choice if he were seen in such an ill-cut coat. It had been good enough for friendship, but it was quite unsuited for sentiment. Has any one ever noticed the extraordinary difference wrought by tailors and sempstresses, who stitch you into youth, aristocratic mien, and nationality at their will? Armar walked in, looking like one of the young dandies in Rotten Row. Isabella clapped her hands with childish delight (she was only eighteen, and I do not want to be too hard upon her). Henry Armar blushed.

'After this, I shall return to my shabby, old-fashioned ways,' he said, smiling; but he was pleased all the same, and looked happier than he had looked since Isabella's strange depression had begun.

As for the girl herself, she laughed; but she was evidently in earnest when she said, 'You must *always* look like that, and we will go and walk in the park together.'

I am afraid there was a childish regard for appearances at the bottom of her heart. She had not lived long enough to estimate the comparative unimportance of such a tribute. And, in truth, to all young people appearances *are* important. The coin is still current in the

Empire of Youth. It rapidly loses its value in the Republic of Middle Age.

Next day, when Armar came, he said that his picture had come home from Sir George's: the colours, which he feared were fading already, had certainly revived, since Sir George had good-naturedly varnished it for him.

There are all sorts of weddings and marriages; it would take many pages to register them, from the marriage of true souls to that of a couple of money-bags. Sometimes the bride and bridegroom are two masked figures, tricked up and disguised, so that it would be hard to say which is the most deceived in the other. Sometimes it is a living creature united to a shadow. Have you ever known a man married to a doll? He chose her out, and paid for her. What a sweet face it is! What high-bred calm! And then, again, come the happy lovers, two and two; as they pass before the high altars, the long white veils of the brides sweep along the grey aisles of the churches; their happiness lightens up the faces looking on. Then, perhaps, some blooming young girl comes up, bringing a crutch and a bronchial wheeze; and it now and then happens that a youth appears, leading a wig of false plaits, a set of artificial teeth, and half a century of bones to the altar. The disparity is not so great as you might imagine. There may be a heart beating still beneath all these adjustments, while the bridegroom, for

all his youth and good looks, has not one single drop of warm blood in his body. So, bad, good, and indifferent, they pass on their way. Sometimes it is Peace and Goodwill who go by hand in hand. What does it matter if Goodwill's beard is grizzled, and Peace has crow's-feet round about her loving eyes? Sometimes it is Pride and Vainglory that go sweeping past down the long church, out into the churchyard beyond. They are a fine-looking couple as they sail along, and they look to see their reflection in the eyes of the bystanders. Sometimes—and this is no very strange phenomenon—it is only the past of one of the contracting parties that is united to the present of the other. They find it out too late.

I do not know what sort of marriage this was to be between Henry Armar and Isabella. He loved, and she hoped that she should love him. Often enough, these are materials to make up a life's happiness; but it depends upon the lives and the people who live them. Hope and faith are not enough, as we know, by themselves, and I think charity must have been wanting in Isabella's heart. She had none absolutely for her lover. She could not help herself. Day after day she used to meet Armar. She felt merciless. All his kindness and gentleness only seemed to make her more indignant and angry. All his devotion only seemed to repel her more and more. And yet she meant to be good and to be grateful, and she struggled hard against herself.

Lady B——, seeing Isabella so nervous and out of spirits, thought that a little gaiety would be a good prescription, and proposed to take her to a ball with her own daughter, who had just come out. Flowers, music, diamond-ladies, dancers floating by in rhythm—what a good medicine for nerves and hypochondria! It is poison if taken in large quantities, but a single dose now and then acts as a wonderful elixir.

Was this Isabella? Henry Armar, who came late to the ball, could hardly believe it as he saw her floating up to him on her partner's arm. She was draped in white, in light, and in radiance. Her face was illumined with happiness; her breath came and went; her hands trembled a little still from the exertion of dancing. All the music seemed reflected from her sweet eyes. She could scarcely stand still; her whole heart seemed in the dance, keeping time to the strains of the musicians. They were playing a cheerful vulgar tune that was in vogue in those days—it was called 'The Grecian Bend;' and though it did small credit to the taste of the musical critics, it jigged on in a gay, irresistible measure, a dactyl-and-spondee sort of tune, that carried the dancers away with it like leaves before the wind; flying, floating, laughing, turning, the great white rush swept by.

'Come—oh, please come and dance,' said Isabella, imploringly, to Armar, holding out her hands.

Poor Armar! years had passed since he had danced;

he had never cared for it at the best of times. 'I am afraid I shall make but a poor partner,' said he; and yet he could not bear to refuse. And they started—Isabella bounding serenely, and floating on the music; Armar half a second behind, jarring like a false note, poor fellow, pulling her back when she would have urged him forwards, stumbling a little, and yet on the whole not quite unsatisfied with his performance. A man at forty-five is too old to begin dancing without some little preparation. When this one stopped, breathless, he saw that Isabella was vexed and disappointed. They were standing against a column in the great glittering ball-room; a fair young princess was crossing the hall, and the dancers were making way for her. 'I told you I should make but a poor partner,' said Armar, seeing Isabella's look of disappointment.

'Trust her to me for one round,' said Nieland, coming from behind the column; and before either of them could say one word, he had whisked Isabella off, a Sabine in floating white wreaths of net and gauze and tarlatane. Nieland, with his foreign legs, could dance as well as Isabella herself. Armar watched them with jealous eyes as they started. The music became their life for the time being; the great palace went spinning round them in vibrations of light. Was this Nieland? was this Isabella? or were they two souls in ecstasy, floating and swinging in sympathy? The walls seemed to open out

into space to Isabella. 'I don't know where I end, or where the music begins,' I heard a girl say the other day. Isabella wanted more and more—she felt as if she could go on for ever. Snddenly, when she had forgotten everything, even her partner, in the happiness of the moment, it all came to an end; they ran up against another couple, and were stopped for an instant—this happened close by the column where Henry Armar was waiting; some cruel hand grasped her relentlessly, and tore her from her dream of delight. It was Armar'.

'Thank you,' he said stiffly to Nieland. Then to Isabella: 'Won't you come and sit down by Lady B——? you will be tired.' Isabella's face fell, but she did not resist his command; and then, a minute afterwards, the music ceased, and all the dancers came back to the earth again, and went to ask for ices at the refreshment-table. It was like the story of *Riquet à la Houp*. The refreshments seemed to grow ready iced and sweetened, springing from underground among flowers and fountains, with a glimpse now and then of white-capped cooks and serving-maids from behind the hanging curtains that concealed the end of the room.

They drove home in the dawning gold that night, through the crisp intoxicating morning air. Isabella could have started afresh and danced the night all over again. Lady B—— had noticed Armar's vexation; not so Isabella, who thanked her chaperone, saying she had

never been so happy in her life; and she gaily put up her fresh smiling face to be kissed when the horses stopped at the door of Bellevue Row, with all its white close-drawn blinds in the dawn.

The next day she was still excited, but after this a reaction set in. Armar's coming did not brighten her: on the contrary, it seemed to depress her spirits strangely; and once more the girl fell into her old listless way. She seemed bewitched; all her evanescent colour was flown once more, and all the freshness gone, silence and languor only in its place. Before the ball we had not known what Isabella's spirits could be; now her sadness struck us more painfully than it had ever done before.

I could see that Armar felt her coldness cruelly, though he was too loyal to speak of it. She shrunk from any demonstration of affection; she was kind sometimes, but only for a minute or two. The time for his circuit was approaching. He would have gladly stayed away; but it is even more necessary for a married man than for a bachelor to do his work in life; and neither Lord B—— nor my lady would hear of his sacrificing his prospects to a feeling, however natural.

He parted from Isabella one evening: he was going early in the morning. He caught her hand, and held it tight. 'Tell me,' he said, 'why are we so far apart? Many and many a younger man might love you less truly. Isabella, why do treat me so strangely?'

She looked up at him with the frightened sweet look that exasperated him. Was it that she did not want him for a lover, but only for a friend? Was it that he was to give her his whole heart, and that she was to take it, and give him a little gratitude only in return?

'Isabella, don't look at me like that!' he cried.

'What am I to say?' she said. 'How can I help my looks?' And the tears came flowing down her cheeks. She went on crying bitterly, and would not be comforted, though her tears seemed to ease poor Armar's wounds. It was a melancholy tribute to his devotion; but since he could obtain no other, he was fain to make the best of this. And then he got into the cab to drive away, and leant out for one more glimpse of her; and Isabella, standing in the shabby doorway, with one of her old sweet grateful gleams, smiled through her tears, and kissed her soft white fingers to him.

Lady B—— had promised to take care of Isabella after Armar was gone; she used to call for her, and take her out driving, and the girl often went over to The Lawn to dine with her good friends.

On one occasion I noticed that she was in a strange nervous excitement; and that very evening, after dinner, Nieland came in, uninvited, and scarcely welcome, I thought, judging from my lady's manner, which was usually so kind, but which could be reserved on occasions. He had been abroad, he said; he had been obliged to come

back. The cold welcome did not seem to affect the young man, he went and sat down in the first vacant chair, and began to talk to one of the sons, who happened to be at home that night. It was rather an interesting conversation, and by degrees we were all drawn into it. It was, I remember, a discussion upon the influence which one person has, consciously or unconsciously, upon another.

'There are no limits to the influences round about us,' said Nieland, hissing his *s*'s. 'We think we like, love, dislike, for reasonable motives, because such and such a person is agreeable, or good-looking, or unpleasant It is nothing of the sort; it is all fate and magnetic attraction.'

'What you call magnetic attraction I call affection and unselfish Christian charity,' said Lady B——, gravely 'Mr. Nieland, I don't like your theories, and I am content to accept the best and greatest blessings of life without discussing them.'

'There, of course, I cannot attempt to contradict you, said Nieland. 'For my part I like to trace things to their sources. I have experienced in myself, in no small degree, the power of an unconscious influence over others. It is a gift I do not desire.'

The little man looked so absurd as he spoke, half-sentimental, half-malicious, that I could not help laughing.

'You may laugh,' he said, more seriously. 'It is because you don't understand what I mean. I cannot' (and

he looked at Isabella) 'create one hair's-breadth of *positive* feeling; nature has made me a negative medium. I can inspire aversion for myself, and also' (and he sighed quite naturally) 'create repulsion between other people. It is the reverse of what is commonly called a magnetic influence. I feel it at times, though I cannot account for it; and then I go away till the temptation is over.'

Lady B——, I could see, got a little vexed. 'I hope you will not let your mind run upon such fancies, Mr. Nieland,' she said. 'No human creature can influence another beyond a certain point, unless the other is a consenting agent. There may be mysteries of sympathy and repulsion we do not understand, but these are but passing impressions, and true friendship and true love must be nolier and stronger than any passing impressions, which are, after all, only shadows of better things.'

'Who believes in any better things?' said Nieland, shaking his head. If he had not looked so utterly miserable I should have felt inclined to take him up with the tongs and put him into the fire. The poor little man had lived upon dreams and fancies and frenzies until the real true simple facts of life seemed all distorted and diluted to him. It made me sad to hear him as he talked on and on in the same strain. I was glad that Isabella had not heard all his disquisition, however; she had left the room a few minutes before, and now came back with a letter in her hand.

'Are you going to town to-night, Mr. Nieland?' she said. 'Will you post this letter for me when you get to town?'

I shall never forget that evening. The moon was streaming over the house-roof, over the dark garden and tree-tops. The high silver night shone steadily, and would not let us rest or sleep. We went wandering about the garden after Nieland had left us. The lighted hall-door was open wide with a glimpse of the bright home within. I remember thinking, as I walked slowly up and down the paths, that sunlight and moonlight were like these very influences of which we had been speaking. Was Isabella in the moonlight the same person as Isabella in the sunshine? I came upon her as I was speculating in this profitless way, or rather upon the sound of her voice—for she was in the shadow, and I could not see her; only Lady B——'s erect little figure standing steady in the trembling moonlight at the entrance of the laurel-grove.

'Come here, Miss Williamson. What is to be done with this poor child?' she said.

Poor Isabella! What, indeed? She seemed helpless, heart-broken, torn by grief.

. . . . . .

'Will you ever forgive me?' she said. 'Will you ever speak to me again? *Indeed*, I could not help it! I could not love him! He was too good, too wise, too gentle for me. I wrote to-night to tell him that it must

never be—never, never! I have sent the letter—I cannot recall it. Is it not terrible?' said the girl; 'oh, is it not terrible?' and she wrung her hands helplessly.

Her poor long-pent-up passion of grief came sobbing through the dark glades. We were all greatly concerned and troubled. We comforted her as well as we could. Who could be angry, viewing her distress? After all, she had a right to break off her engagement if she wished to do so. She told me afterwards that it was ever since Nieland had painted her picture in the studio in Langham Street that the impulse had haunted her. It was not that she loved anyone else, but she found she did not love Armar. Was not that a reason not to marry him? And yet he was worthy of a whole heart's truth and devoted affection. He showed it in the way he bore the cruel parting.

He did not reproach her. He was very bitterly indignant for a little while. I could not have believed that such a depth of emotion lay hidden under Armar's gentle deliberateness. It was not at first that he quite realised what had happened. When he had read and re-read her letter, when he had seen her for the last time, then he understood that fate was against him.

'Your letter is a cruel blow to me,' he wrote. 'You are right to break off your engagement if it is not for your happiness. You have not understood me, nor the worth of a love that I gave you. I have sometimes thought this before now. I am sorry for you, as well as

for myself. I am sure you must have suffered very much. For myself, I shall never think of any other woman except the one who has done me a cruel wrong; who is still dear to me notwithstanding. This is not your merit, Isabella: it is my fate; and it seems hard that the true heart I had to give should not have found a home. Now it is too late. Good-bye, my dearest. My chambers will seem a little more dreary, and I shall no longer come to The Lawn.'

When Isabella married, as she did a year or two after, Armar sent her a kind letter and a diamond star he said he had by him for some time. Perhaps it may have been bought for her long before.

VI.

The end of my story is a sad one. Armar never was quite himself again. It was not from any special cause that he fell ill; but I heard he was ailing, and often out of town. He did not rally, somehow, and his interest in things seemed to flag. He had taken upon him the bondage of self late in life—it was too late to cast it off, and live as he had done before with other hearts, and happinesses, and sorrows than his own. Once he came face to face with Isabella walking with her husband. She uttered an exclamation, and would have spoken, but he shook his head and bowed, and walked away.

. . . . . .

One morning, not long ago, I met Lady B—— by chance, looking very pale and sad. She was driving, but she stopped her carriage, and asked me if I would come with her. 'We have very bad news,' she said. 'Our dear old friend, Henry Armar, is dead. My husband went to him. It was down at Richmond that it happened. He left a message that he wished that I should go and burn his papers,' said the kind lady, with her eyes full of tears;

'and I am on my way now to his chambers. Will you come with me?' she said. 'It is so sad going there alone; and yet I did not like to take my girls.'

I was glad to be able to help her. I said yes, I would go with her, and we rolled away together, thinking of the last time we had been there and of our merry luncheon-party. We were expected; the laundress opened the door and dropped a curtsey. 'I have lighted the fire, as you told me, my lady. There is no one come yet,' she said; and Lady B—— explained that she had appointed the heir-at-law to meet her.

The place seemed scarcely changed, except that it was empty, and its owner was gone for ever. There was his chair by the fireside, his table, and the ink and the pens lying ready for use. And there was the desk and there was the cabinet where his letters were, tied up and docketed and all in order. It was very sad, and yet very peaceful: the long drudgery was over, the weary waiting was ended, and the sadness and loneliness finished. Our tears fell as we went about the place with hearts full of affectionate remembrance. How kind he had been, what a trusty and faithful friend! There was the glass that would reflect his face no more: the unopened books and letters that he would never see lying in a heap on his table. The heir-at-law came while we were waiting. His name was Armar too; he was a cousin, a cheerful country squire, troubled by no great feeling or regret for a person

he had scarcely known. He begged us to do what we would with the papers, and walked about the room glancing somewhat contemptuously at its shabby furniture and quaint relics of ancient china or bronze ware. He was evidently no amateur of rococo.

The squire looked about, and then walked into the bedroom, which was all straight and in order, never again to be inhabited by the person who had lived there so long.

'Why, what is this?' said the squire, in his loud voice. 'A picture-frame? a lady without a head! What a strange fancy!'

It was as he said; the picture still hung in its place; the face had faded and faded entirely away, and only those who knew the secret could have told who the picture represented. The secret was in the packet of letters that I held in my hand, and which I flung into the fire in which we were burning the papers.

The squire watched us in silence and did not interfere. He was still there, when we heard the wheels of a carriage drive up, and the laundress flung open the door. 'Perhaps it is my husband,' said Lady B——, looking up tremulously. But it was a lady who came up the stairs, with a rustle of garments, into the room. For an instant she stood quite still, bewildered and surprised, very pale, with gleaming dark eyes, and her white gown falling about her.

Need I say that it was Isabella? She was carrying a great bunch of yellow roses in her hand (for summer-time had again come round, and the flowers were blooming everywhere). Isabella hurried up to us, stumbling, in her grief, over her long trailing dress.

'What sad news! Oh, what sad news!' she said, with a long shivering sigh. 'Oh, dear Lady B——, I could not stay away! I came to see him once more. Don't—please don't refuse! I must see him again! I promised him to come—he asked me not to be sorry.' And she smiled in a strange, forced way.

Lady B—— could not speak; and it was the cousin who answered. 'Poor fellow!' he said. 'You are too late; everything is over. It all happened at Richmond.' And then he opened the door, towards which Isabella had instinctively moved. He opened it and walked in, and a moment afterwards I heard an exclamation from him. 'How strange!' he said. 'There is some sense in that picture after all. I did not make out the face before—I see it now.'

As Isabella stood crying and hanging her head, it seemed indeed as if a faint image of her likeness was repeated in the frame that hung over her head. It may have been that she was standing beside it, and that her face suggested a meaning to the discoloured traces of the likeness we remembered.

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Ritchie, Anne Isabella (Thackeray)
Miss Angel

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